

**DAVID AND SOLOMON – INVESTIGATING THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

by

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(vii) **Summary:** The historicity of the United Monarchy has recently come under attack. The biblical ‘minimalists’ say that a reconstruction of ancient Israel is impossible with the sources that we have access to, and the glory and wealth of Solomon’s empire is mere fiction. They disregard the Bible as a reliable source, and archaeology because it is mute and open to interpretation. Some scholars have suggested lowering the traditional dates on certain archaeological strata, resulting in an entirely different picture of the tenth century BCE.

Other scholars say that the United Monarchy definitely did exist and consider the Bible a valuable historical source. The evidence for the tenth century and the United Monarchy as shown by the Hebrew Bible and archaeology is investigated as well as various key sites in Israel. The conclusion is that the traditional chronology and viewpoint of the United Monarchy still needs to be respected.

Key terms:

Historicity	Hebrew Bible
Biblical minimalists	Excavation History
Low Chronology	Iron-age Fortifications
Bi-chrome pottery	Six-chambered gates
Casemate walls	United Monarchy

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DAVID AND SOLOMON – INVESTIGATING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of dissertation

In my dissertation, I propose to discuss various views taken by different scholars on the historicity of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon. This also involves investigating the archaeological evidence and data at various sites, which relate to different strata that are presently attributed to the tenth century BCE, as well as proposals for alternative dating of the strata.

In an article in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Prof Amnon Ben-Tor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem states: 'King David and King Solomon ruled under the United Monarchy, the era of Israel's greatest glory. But how much of the Biblical account is historical and how much scriptural exaggeration?' (Ben Tor 1999:31).

I aim to show that the traditional view of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon still needs to be respected and not abandoned as impossible. While we cannot ignore the issues that the Biblical Minimalists raise, further research and investigation into all relevant sources is necessary before we consider abandoning the traditional viewpoint of the tenth century BCE.

1.2 The problem

The tenth century BCE in Iron Age Israel has become the focus of controversy and fierce debate amongst biblical scholars, historians and archaeologists in recent years. In their interpretation of the evidence, some scholars give vastly different views to the traditionally accepted ideas of the tenth century BCE, and the United Monarchy of David and Solomon. Because archaeological evidence is always silent, it is therefore open to various interpretations.

David is understood to have ruled from c.1000-960 BCE and Solomon from c.960-920 BCE, when Israel was united for a short period under a single monarch. Archaeologically, this period has become a highly controversial issue amongst scholars, and it needs to be decided, which artifacts and archaeological evidence date to the tenth century BCE, and which to a later period, the ninth or even eighth century BCE.

If the different strata at particular sites could be accurately identified, we would have a much better idea of the material culture and traditions of the peoples of that time. Attributing a stratum to another time period, other than the originally accepted one, would lead to a totally different interpretation of that particular period.

1.3 The following chapters

In Chapter 2, the relevance of the Hebrew Bible as an archaeological source is discussed. It is our major written source for information on the tenth century BCE, the United Monarchy and the reigns of David and Solomon. The different methods and approaches to the Hebrew Bible are investigated as well as the biblical references that give us information on the United Monarchy, and on David and Solomon.

In Chapter 3, the way the various chronologies are used in archaeology for dating artifacts and strata is discussed, as well as the Low Chronology, which Israel Finkelstein proposes for dating the United Monarchy. In Chapter 4, the fortifications and material culture of Iron Age II is investigated, with a view to identifying the strata that belong to the tenth century BCE and examining the historicity of the United Monarchy.

Chapter 5 attempts to investigate and evaluate the views of the biblical minimalists on the Bible as a historical source, as well as their views on the tenth century BCE and the United Monarchy. Chapter 6 puts forward Israel Finkelstein's proposed new dating for the strata traditionally associated with the tenth century BCE, as well as Amihai Mazar's rejection of the same.

In the remaining Chapters 7-10, I have attempted to evaluate the archaeological evidence at different key sites, by discussing the views of various scholars, as well as the written sources and archaeological artifacts that date to the tenth century BCE. Jerusalem, Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer, and Tel Jezreel and Tel Rehov are the sites I have singled out as providing key evidence for solutions to the controversy surrounding the tenth century BCE and the historicity of the United Monarchy. The excavation history is discussed and I have attempted to evaluate the latest excavation results and archaeological evidence found at these sites.

Chapter 11 concludes the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE UNITED MONARCHY

2.1 Introduction

Biblical archaeology originally evolved from a desire to understand the Bible. The interpretation of finds was aimed at illuminating the biblical narrative. Gradually however, the scope was extended, and 'Biblical archaeology adapted itself to universal developments in archaeological research' (Mazar 1990:xv). Archaeology in Palestine is now an independent discipline, a science in its own right, which aims at reconstructing the human past. Historical research has a similar goal, with the basic difference being in the subject matter, and while archaeology concerns itself with the material remains, historical research deals with the written records. While the two disciplines function independently, ideally they should supplement and compliment each other.

The reigns of David and Solomon, and the period of the United Monarchy are recorded at length in the Hebrew Bible, which remains the main written source for this period. The Hebrew Bible as a source, as well as the relevant sections needs to be investigated and discussed.

The Jews know the Hebrew Bible as the TANAK, which is an acronym from the first letters of the three divisions, the *Torah* (the Law), the *Nevi'im* (the Prophets) and the *Kethuvim* (the Writings). Christians refer to the same book as the Old Testament. It contains many different literary forms, and the stories tell of a 'conflict charged political history, intertwined with more than a thousand years of ancient Near Eastern history' (Gottwald 1985:6). The Hebrew Bible has been sacred scripture to both Jews and Christians for over two thousand years, and has gained a prominent place in Western civilisation.

Initially the Bible was used solely 'to provide underpinning for Jewish and Christian religious communities' (Gottwald 1985:7), but as a result of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment, as well as social changes and improved scientific

methods, it has become possible to approach the Hebrew Bible in many different ways, both scientific and otherwise.

Biblical scholars today specialise in various methods, and the issue is seldom seen 'as a matter of agreeing on what *one* method should replace the others but...of how *various legitimate methods*...should be joined so as to produce an overall grasp of the Hebrew Bible in its most fundamental aspects' (Gottwald 1985:8).

2.2 Different methods and approaches to the Hebrew Bible

Different assumptions, points of view and methods have lead to various interpretations and understandings of the text, and only by being aware of the methods used will we be able to understand why scholars have reached so many different conclusions.

2.2.1 The confessional religious approach

As stated previously, the Jews and Christians initially studied the Bible in order to understand and practise their religion. The Bible's role was purely religious and was understood to be the divinely revealed 'Word of God.' The Jewish Enlightenment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century resulted in more symbolic and more liberal interpretations, but the religious understanding has not ceased today, and even more religious interpretations have emerged. Gottwald states: 'Although the traditional confessional interpretations are no longer unchallenged, they are still powerfully advocated in many Jewish and Christian circles' (Gottwald 1985:9).

2.2.2 The historical-critical approach

The historical-critical method does not take the biblical documents at face value, but rather attempts to discover the origins of the texts with a view to reconstructing the growth of a book before its canonisation. The approach results in a critical enquiry into the document itself and compares the texts with other contemporary documents. It looks into the reliability of the texts on historical events and includes methods such as literary criticism, source criticism, transmission history, form criticism, tradition history and redaction history (Deist 1987:75).

These critics did not believe that the Bible lost its religious significance when subjected to historical-critical analysis, but that they would be able to uncover the origins and development of Jewish religious ideas and practices. They believed that the message of the Bible should be understood in the context in which the text was written or edited.

The claimed authorship of biblical writings came under scrutiny, and the critics observed that even when a book was correctly attributed to a particular author, later redactors made numerous additions and alterations. Thus the final form of the book may only have come about centuries after the initial recording. Source criticism studies the oral and written sources, which were used in the compilation of the different texts. These sources were expanded, altered, refined and combined, and went through many phases of development before the final form 'was reached over a span of post-exilic time from the sixth through the second centuries BCE' (Gottwald 1985:15).

Historical criticism has also used archaeology to help illuminate the history of biblical communities and the history of the Israelite people. The results of excavations and the discovery of numerous inscriptions and texts have aided in this reconstruction.

2.2.3 Literary and Social Science approaches

Scholars realised that the religious and historical-critical approaches, while important for clarifying certain aspects of the text, had limitations. Their main focus was on the reconstruction of history and religion, while the literary aspect of the texts was neglected. Two new methods evolved. New Literary Criticism saw the Hebrew Bible as a literary production, which created its own world of meaning, while Social Scientific Criticism, saw the Hebrew Bible as a social document, which reflected the changing social structures and functions in ancient Israel.

2.3 Biblical sources for understanding the Monarchic Age

The monarchic age or the period of the monarchy of ancient Israel spanned four centuries, from the tenth to the sixth centuries BCE. The United Monarchy is reported to account for approximately a quarter of that time, with the Bible recording

the reigns of David and Solomon as forty years each (2 Samuel 5:4; 1 Kings 11:42). The Divided Monarchy, which came about after the death of Solomon in the late tenth century BCE, lasted until 722 BCE when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians, while the southern kingdom Judah lasted until 586 BCE when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took many of the inhabitants into exile.

The Bible is our main source for understanding the culture and traditions of ancient Israel. Unfortunately there are limitations to the knowledge that it imparts. We need to try and understand the perspectives of the biblical writers or redactors, their different points of view and their biases, and to understand that the records in the Bible were mostly written centuries after the events that they tell about.

We also need to find out what the aim of the writers was, because it almost certainly was not to record history, as we know it today. If we approach the Bible with all this in mind, we are more likely to discover its value as our major source of knowledge for this period.

2.3.1 Biblical writings that derive from the Monarchic Age

The great traditionists J and E, the law document of Deuteronomy, and the prophetic writings of Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah of Jerusalem, Jeremiah and others 'all constitute sources for understanding the monarchic era' (Gottwald 1985:294). They are all different literary forms that are believed to have evolved during the period of the monarchy, from the tenth to the sixth centuries BCE. In that context they can be seen as sources for understanding the monarchic age.

2.3.2 The Deuteronomistic History as a source for the Monarchy

Traditionists in the Northern Kingdom, thought to be as early as the ninth century BCE, developed a style of instruction that encouraged obedience to Yahweh as expressed in the old laws. This instruction appeared to be in conflict with the politics of the Israelite monarchies. These traditionists, probably priests, prophets and wisdom teachers, came to be known as Deuteronomists, and their traditions were preserved in the south after the northern kingdom collapsed in 722 BCE. In Josiah's reforms in 622 BCE, the traditions resurfaced and when his reforms failed, they were

recorded and appear in the present books of Deuteronomy through to Kings. This became known as the Deuteronomistic History.

This theory is today under attack by a prominent scholar Eckhardt Otto. He is of the opinion that there is no final redactor like the Deuteronomist as is widely accepted in scholarly circles. Otto will present his views in a publication that will be published shortly.

A second revision was undertaken during the Babylonian exile and is considered to be a re-telling of Israel's history in the light of the exile. It looks for a reason for the exile. This history was intended to 'interpret the course of the monarchies in Israel from the point of view of covenant loyalty and disobedience' (Gottwald 1985:139). The narratives of the kings follow a fixed pattern. This is an important feature in the religious appraisal of the kings (Bosman & Loader 1988:56).

In the books of Samuel and Kings, the Deuteronomist seeks to explain the failure of Israel's kings, and although the material contains information of historical value, it is biased by the Deuteronomist's interpretation. The narrative recounted in the books of Kings is a survey of the events between the time of Solomon and the exile, aiming to explain the exile. The record of Solomon's reign is found in 1 Kings 3-11, and portrays him as a wise and powerful king. The books have no uniform message and should be understood in the context of Josiah's reign, his reformation and the exile. Obedience to God serves as a condition for the promise of an eternal Davidic dynasty. The exile is justified as the judgement of God on Manasseh and the nation (Bosman & Loader 1988:73).

2.3.3 The Chronistic History as a source for the Monarchy

The Chronistic writer's work was originally thought to have consisted of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah but this unity has since been questioned. The narratives recount the story from Adam to the time of the Chronicler, who has incorporated various sources in his work. It also includes many additions and should be understood against the background of the post-exilic period in Israel (Bosman & Loader 1988:98). The Persian rulers were probably more tolerant than the Babylonians, by allowing those in exile to return to Israel. The Chronicler lays

particular emphasis on the cult and the law, the Davidic kingship and God's intervention in history.

The dating of the books of Chronicles varies from the sixth to the second century BCE, with some scholars accepting a date in the fourth century BCE, and others dating the books to the Hellenistic period around 250 BCE. The reason for this is that the Chronicler makes no mention of the fall of the Persian Empire and is acquainted with the whole Pentateuch (Fohrer 1968:239).

2.4 David and Solomon's reputations in the biblical records

The stories concerning the rise of David and how he became king in spite of persecution by Saul are found in 1 and 2 Samuel. The narrator emphasises that David's early successes are the result of his obedience to God. According to 2 Samuel 8, he defeated the Philistines and the Moabites, as well as Hadadezer king of Rehob and the Arameans of Damascus.

Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River.

2 Samuel 8:3

When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The Lord gave David victory everywhere he went.

2 Samuel 8:5-6

David is said to have taken the gold and silver from all the nations that he had conquered, up to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 9 goes on to tell how David conquered the Edomites.



Map 1: The kingdom of David ca 990-968 BCE (Aharoni & Avi-Yonah 1977:68).

And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The Lord gave David victory everywhere he went. David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.

2 Samuel 8:13-15

2 Samuel 10 tells of David's defeat of the Ammonites and Arameans and according to these biblical accounts, David's conquests were many, and his kingdom was vast. Jerusalem had become the political and religious centre of this kingdom, the Philistines had been repelled for good, Transjordan had been reduced to submission and David's authority had extended to include the Arameans in southern Syria.

The redactors or writers of 1 Kings 3-11 show Solomon as an extremely wise, wealthy and powerful ruler with an empire stretching from the Euphrates River to Egypt.

And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

(1 Kings 4:21, NIV)

The Chronicler goes even further and neutralises most of the negative aspects of Solomon's reign. His role as temple builder and co-founder with David of the Jerusalem cult is emphasised, as is his great wealth and wisdom (Miller & Hayes 1986:189).

King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. All the kings of the earth sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

(2 Chronicles 9:22-23, NIV)

In the New Testament, Luke sees Solomon's role as the epitome of 'splendour, opulence and wise government' (Miller & Hayes 1986:189).

Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

(Luke 12:27, NIV)

But if he was so wealthy, how do we explain the fact that he conceded twenty cities in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre? (1 Ki 9:10-14).

King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted.

(1 Kings 9:11, NIV)

If he was so powerful, and ruled from the Euphrates to Egypt, why was he troubled by Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Damascus and Jeroboam son of Nebat the Ephraimite?

Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel. Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

(1 Kings 11:25-26, NIV)

And finally, if he was so wise, why did he exploit his people through forced labour so that the bulk of his kingdom broke away from Jerusalem at his death, and resulted in the schism of the North and South? (1 Kings 12:1-20).

The biblical evidence is therefore conflicting. When taken together with the archaeological evidence, it would appear that Solomon was not quite as wealthy or powerful as some of the biblical evidence states, and his empire was perhaps not as vast as suggested in 1 Kings 4:21. The records appear exaggerated at times, in order to stress Solomon's importance and to justify the monarchy. The writers were not acquainted with history as we understand it today, and we need to attempt to understand the reasoning behind their writings, and the message they wished to convey.

David is credited with many of the Psalms, which we now know he did not write, and Solomon is credited with many of the Wisdom books (Proverbs 1:1, Ecclesiastes 1:1, Song of Songs 1:1, Wisdom of Solomon 9:7-8). The books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and the Wisdom of Solomon were all written long after Solomon's death.

2.5 Conclusion

The Hebrew Bible is one of our main sources for reconstructing a history of Israel and its peoples, but one needs to be aware of the limitations and biases of the original authors, as well as the translators, and also those of today's readers, before arriving at any conclusions.

The biblical books that actually recount the story of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon were written or redacted several centuries after the events that they profess to record. They were also written in a language, which is unfamiliar to us today, and we need to rely on translations. A translator must attempt to reproduce the meaning of a passage as understood by the writer, and the intention of the biblical writers is often not clear. An accurate historical account, as we understand history today, was obviously not a priority, as these writers neither understood nor knew the genre.

The aim of the redactors or writers is important and it is necessary to attempt to discover what message they wanted to convey to their listeners. It is also necessary to remember that the worldview from that period was vastly different to that of today,

the Bible was written in a different cultural context. The writings need to be understood in the context in which they were written, but to state that no historical reconstruction is possible from the biblical records is extreme.

The different approaches and methods of interpreting the Bible over the years have been vast and varied. As a theological document or as a historical source, the Bible needs to be analysed and interpreted. The Bible needs to be respected as one of the major sources for reconstructing the tenth century BCE, and as such should not be disregarded.

CHAPTER 3

CHRONOLOGY OF THE UNITED MONARCHY

3.1 Introduction

There is presently fierce controversy concerning the dating of the United Monarchy. Israel Finkelstein suggests lowering the traditional tenth century BCE dating, while other scholars such as Amihai Mazar and William Dever maintain the traditional view. The biblical minimalists question the historicity of the United Monarchy, and challenge the biblical records as well as the archaeological evidence, which they claim is non-existent. In order to accurately establish the period of David and Solomon, it is necessary to investigate the ways in which the various chronologies may be applied to archaeology.

One of the biggest problems facing an archaeologist is the question of dating. If the finds are set in a chronological framework, the archaeologist will be able to construct a narrative into which his finds can be integrated (Moorey 1981:68). Until the end of the nineteenth century, all historical chronology for Palestine was based on the genealogies in the Hebrew Bible. The Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher (1581-1656) summarised the history of the world from the creation to the dispersion of the Jews under the Roman Emperor, Vespasian. In his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* he placed Creation at 4004 BCE, and Moorey says:

Now that the precision of this seventeenth century divine in dating the creation is treated as a joke, it is very difficult to appreciate the enormous intellectual revolution which in the nineteenth century, transformed man's conception of the antiquity of the world in which he lived.

(Moorey 1981:68)

Various scientific methods of dating are used today in order to obtain a chronological framework within which to work, and in order for the archaeologist to accurately

interpret the data. Unfortunately the evidence is mute, and is therefore open to different interpretations, which may depend on the possible presuppositions and biases of an archaeologist.

3.2 Relative chronology

Relative chronology is a sequence, where layer A for instance is before layer B, and layer B before layer C, etc. One stratum is placed earlier or later than another on the comparison of the material remains. Comparative studies of stratified assemblages, particularly pottery, from various sites in a certain region, allow for the definition of a relative sequence in each area (Mazar 1990:28). This has led to the division into the three ages, Stone, Bronze and Iron, which is an effective method for establishing a relative chronology. Each age is divided into phases, Early, Middle and Late, and each phase may be sub-divided into divisions, with scholars differing over the precise dating of the sub-divisions (Moorey 1981:69).

Table 1: The archaeological periods of Palestine (Mazar 1990:30).

Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and B	ca 8500-6000 BCE
Pottery Neolithic A and B	6000-4300 BCE
Chalcolithic	4300-3300 BCE
Early Bronze I	3300-3050 BCE
Early Bronze II-III	3050-2300 BCE
Early Bronze IV/Middle Bronze I	2300-2000 BCE
Middle Bronze IIA	2000-1800/1750 BCE
Middle Bronze IIB-C	1800/1750-1550 BCE
Late Bronze I	1550-1400 BCE
Late Bronze IIA-B	1400-1200 BCE
Iron IA	1200-1150 BCE
Iron IB	1150-1000 BCE
Iron IIA	1000-925 BCE
Iron IIB	925-720 BCE
Iron IIC	720-586 BCE

Relative chronology holds that it is only possible to arrive at chronological conclusions when comparing fortifications and buildings from the same time period, as well as similar regions. During the period of the Divided Monarchy, there were different political powers and administrative bodies in Israel and Judah, and it is therefore impossible to compare Megiddo in the north, with Lachish or Jerusalem in the south. During the period of the United Monarchy, when David and Solomon are supposed to have existed, although the region was ruled from the central capital of Jerusalem, the southern sites, highland sites and northern sites should all be dealt with separately as they were all influenced by different factors.

Table 2: Comparative stratigraphy of Iron Age IIA and IIB sites (Mazar 90:372-373).

	1000BCE	925BCE	732-701BCE	
Dan		IV	III	II
Hazor	X	IX	VIII,VII,VI, VB,VA	
Beth Shean	Upper V		IV	
Megiddo	VB	VA/IVB	IVA	III
Jerusalem	14	13	12	11
Gezer	IX	VIII	VII	VI
Lachish	V	IV	III	II
Beer-sheba	VII VI	V	IV	III
Arad		XII	XI X IX	III VII-VI

3.3 Absolute chronology

Once a relative chronology has been obtained, an absolute chronology can be established. An absolute chronology depends on finding objects that can be accurately dated to a specific period, and dating the stratum in which the object was found to the same period. When these artifacts are mixed with unclassified artifacts, it enables these unclassified artifacts to be dated to the same period. Flinders Petrie

(1843-1942) excavated at Tell el-Hesi in 1890, on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and established the principle of cross dating.

Carbon-14 dating has been used to establish dates for earlier periods, but there have been serious problems with its use, and the accuracy is questioned. Recently, newer refined methods of Carbon-14 dating, with greater accuracy, are being used.

3.4 Traditional chronology

The traditional chronology of the United Monarchy and the tenth century BCE, which is the period in which David and Solomon are presumed to have existed, accepts that Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, Stratum X at Hazor, Stratum VIII at Gezer, Stratum V at Lachish, Stratum XII at Arad and Stratum V at Beer-sheba all belong to the tenth century BCE, and that these strata all reflect the administrative cities of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon. The six-chambered gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer, are accepted as Solomonic, initially by Yigael Yadin, on the basis of the biblical verse in I Kings 9:15.

Based on the biblical references, the traditional view of Jerusalem in the Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE) period is that it was a small well-fortified town inhabited by Jebusites. David, who transformed it into the capital of the United Monarchy, captured this town. He founded a dynasty, and brought the Ark of Yahweh to Jerusalem. Solomon enlarged the town and built palaces and a temple, and his empire is said to have stretched from the Euphrates to Egypt. These traditions are all recorded or referred to in the Biblical books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah, as well as in the Psalms. Steiner says: 'The Bible describes Jerusalem as a beautiful city, the capital of a large and wealthy empire' (Steiner 1998:29).

Solomon is believed to have converted stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, like Hazor and Gezer into a fortified city (I Kings 9:15). Discoveries at Hazor and Gezer induced Yadin to re-excavate Megiddo in order to clarify some of the stratigraphic problems, but the stratigraphy at Megiddo, and the dating of the Philistine Bichrome pottery are the two pillars on which the structure of the archaeology of the United Monarchy and its chronology has always depended.

3.5 Low chronology

Recently, the chronology and historicity of the United Monarchy has become a hotly contested issue, with scholars such as Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin suggesting lowering the traditional chronology. The biblical minimalists have cast doubt on the historicity of the United Monarchy, suggesting that the Bible is useless as an historical document (Shanks 1997b:26). By lowering the chronology, the tenth century would become a void and there would be no United Monarchy, and no David and Solomon. The Biblical stories would be no more than fiction. These scholars base their proposals on their interpretation of the archaeological evidence, while others question whether the material presented has been accurately assessed and critically evaluated (Steiner 1998:41).

Finkelstein's proposed new dating, puts Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, Stratum XI at Arad, Stratum V at Beer-sheba and Stratum VIII at Gezer in the ninth century BCE while Stratum VIA at Megiddo, Stratum VII at Beer-sheba and Strata IX and X at Gezer would be left representing the tenth century BCE. He does however accept the traditional dating of Stratum XII at Arad to the tenth century BCE.

The implications for this period are that while the ninth century BCE would be represented by large well-fortified cities with monumental construction and advanced administration, the tenth century BCE cities would appear as small, unfortified villages. As for the United Monarchy, Finkelstein states that 'The kingdom of David and Solomon could have been a chiefdom, or an early state, in a stage of territorial expansion, but with no monumental construction and advanced administration' (Finkelstein 1996:185). He does not deny the historicity of the United Monarchy.

3.6 Conclusion

These different chronologies need to be understood and considered together, before a final dating on any stratum or artifact can be suggested or recommended. Archaeology is mute, and therefore open to interpretation, so even when all the evidence points to a specific time period, there are always differing viewpoints, presuppositions and biases.

In this case, the question of chronology is of paramount importance, because it is necessary to discover which archaeological artifacts and strata at various sites can be identified as belonging to the tenth century BCE. The extent and very existence of the United Monarchy depends on identifying these strata at the various key sites. The biblical account records a vast and powerful empire, but the archaeological evidence may not agree with these accounts. Only by uncovering the material culture in the tenth century BCE, will it be possible to arrive at a conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

FORTIFICATIONS AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE TENTH CENTURY BCE

4.1 Introduction

Iron Age Israelite towns had many common features. Depending on the size of the town, many of them possessed a fortification system, which may have included the city gate with a piazza near the gate, streets, public buildings such as palaces, store buildings, stables, cult places, drainage and water supply systems, and obviously their dwellings (Mazar 1990:463).

With the rise of the Monarchy, a new pattern of settlement has been noted. Many small villages were abandoned and others were developed into towns, although knowledge of this is still limited. Many tenth century BCE levels have been identified, and the evidence suggests that although there was a renewal of urbanisation, the towns were not densely populated or built up.

As well as the tenth century BCE levels at the royal cities of Megiddo (Stratum VA-IVB), Hazor (Stratum X) and Gezer (Stratum VIII), tenth century BCE levels have been identified at Dan, Yoqneam, Beth-Shemesh, Timnah, Lachish, Arad, Beer-sheba and others.

The size of the towns, and the type of fortifications used in the levels identified with the tenth century BCE will be able to tell us much about the United Monarchy. The biblical records suggest a wealthy and powerful state, stretching over a vast area, with a capable administration and infrastructure. It is necessary to see whether the archaeological evidence supports these accounts.



Map 2: Map of the Iron Age II sites (Mazar 1990:370)

4.2 Casemate walls

Fortifications at these sites, mostly casemate walls, have been found at Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo, Yoqneam, Tell Beit Mirsim, Tell en-Nasbeh and Beth-Shemesh, as well as fortresses in the Negev. Some solid walls have also been dated to the tenth century, such as those found at Gezer and Beer-sheba, but this dating has been challenged. At other sites from this period there were no walls, and the outer walls of houses along the perimeter of the towns served as a defence.

Yigal Shiloh considers the casemate wall to be a definite unit from the tenth century BCE onwards. It was composed of double walls with dividing walls between them, and often did not serve as an independent unit but was incorporated into the buildings surrounding the city (Shiloh 1987:13). These solid casemate walls were constructed using ashlar masonry, which was laid out in a header and stretcher fashion, and were usually about 1.5 metres wide. As the status of the city grew, more important buildings were incorporated into the wall, such as at Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor. Although similar walls are known from the Middle Bronze Age, the distinctive casemate walls of the Iron Age have been related to architectural developments during the Israelite settlement period. These walls ceased to be the main form of fortification in the ninth century BCE, but because of their convenience as storerooms and living quarters, they continued in use within the prevailing fortifications for many years (Silberman 1989:59).

4.3 Offset-inset walls

The offset-inset wall replaced the casemate wall, because it offered greater security against siege warfare, such as battering rams, scaling ladders and tunnelling. At Megiddo and Hazor, the casemate walls were filled and extended by the construction of a solid wall, which had a very broad stone foundation, supporting a superstructure of mud brick (Silberman 1989:60). The walls at Megiddo and Hazor have been attributed to the military preparations of King Ahab (871-852 BCE), while the offset-inset walls at Lachish are found pictured on the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, after the conquest of Lachish in 701 BCE.

4.4 Gate complex

The gate complex was one of the most imposing features of Israelite and Judean cities, and often consisted of an indirect approach to the city between an outer gate on the slope of the mound and an inner gate on the summit. A ramp supported by retaining walls led to the outer gate, and such gate complexes are known at Dan, Megiddo, Tirzah, Gezer, Timnah, Lachish and Beer-sheba (Mazar 1990:469).

Six-chamber inner gates are traditionally considered to be a common feature of the Solomonic era such as those at Gezer, Hazor and Megiddo and shortly after, such as the one at Lachish. Later examples can be seen at Timnah and Tel Ira in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.

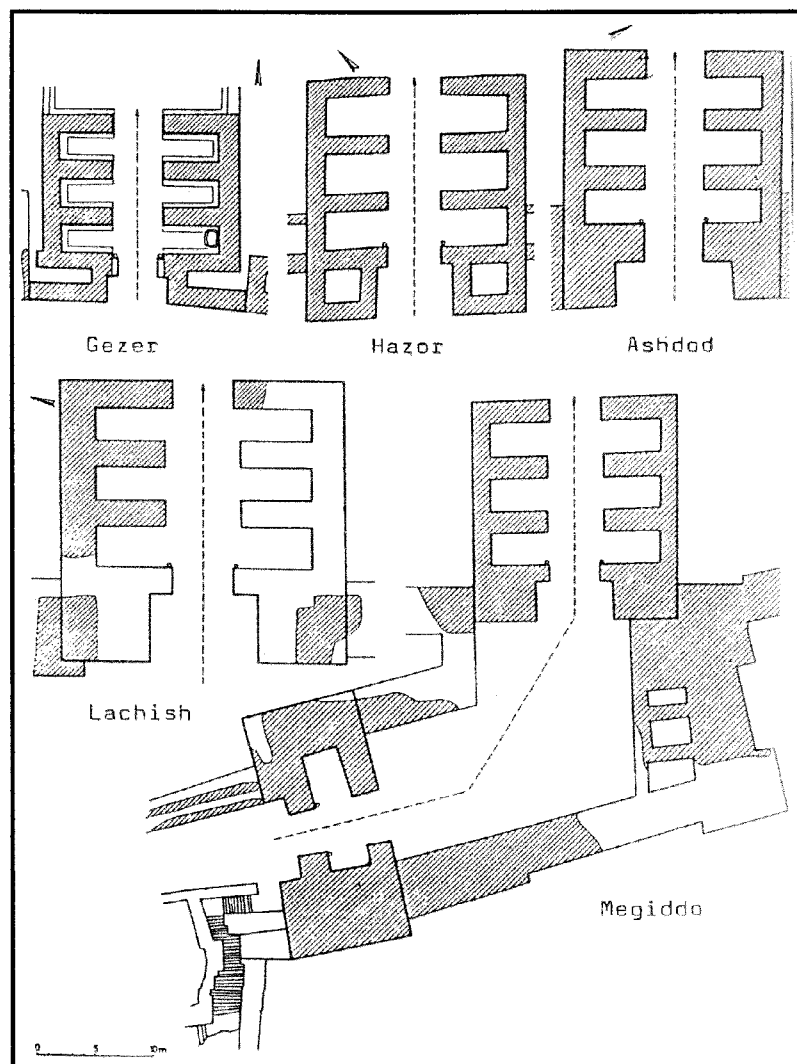


Illustration 1: Selected plans of Iron Age II city gates (Mazar 1990:384).

Four-chamber gates are apparent in the ninth century, at Beer-sheba, Megiddo, Dan and Dor. Mazar believes that the simpler version became common in the later part of the Iron Age (Mazar 1990:469).

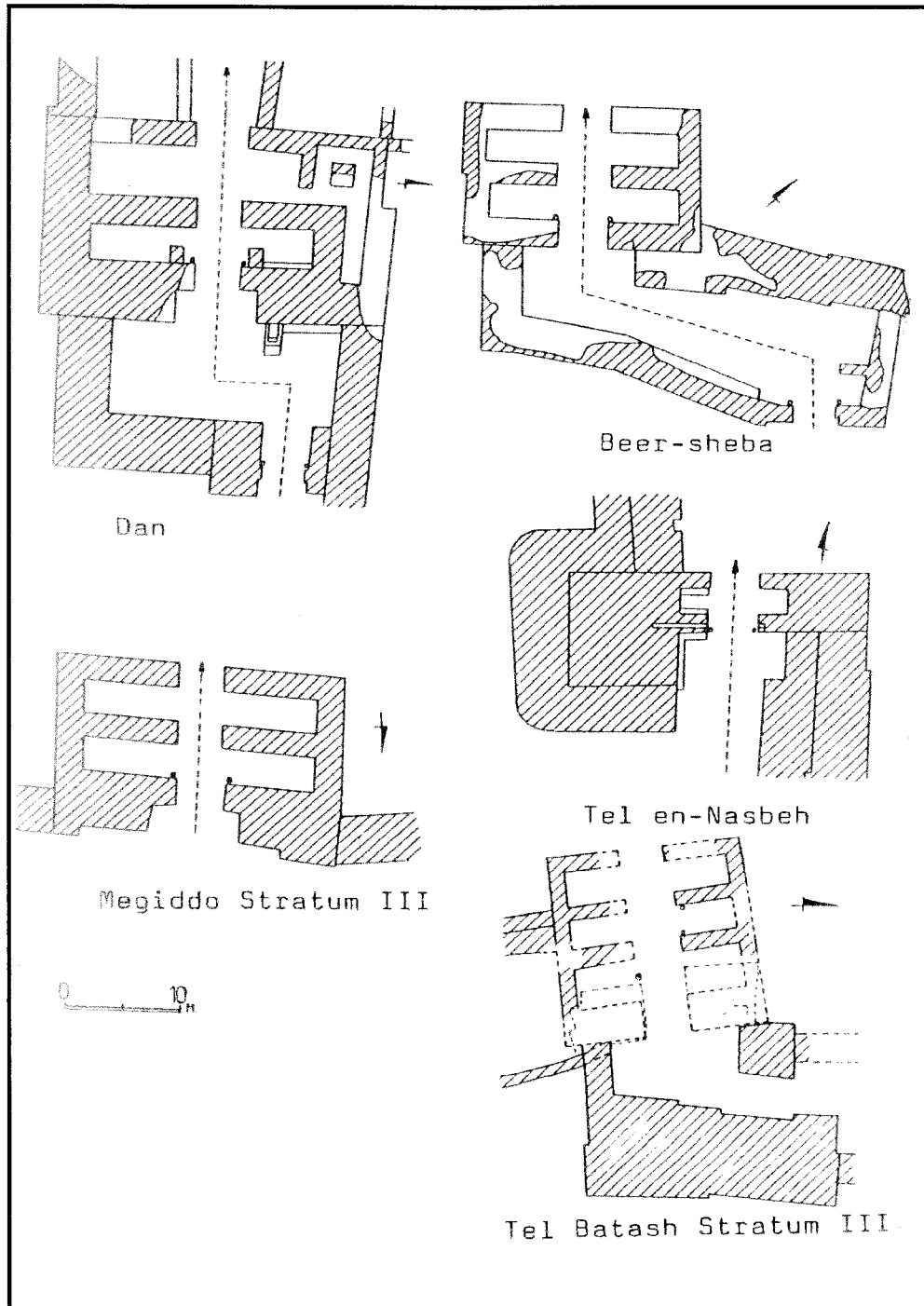


Illustration 2: Selected Plans of Iron Age II city gates (Mazar 1990:468).

As well as their defensive function, the gates also played a role in the daily life of the city, as a market place, place of judgement by the elders, and as a general assembly area where the rulers made appearances. Cult practices were also carried out at the gates, and benches and water troughs suggest that traders also used the area.

The Biblical Minimalists now challenge the dating of the six-chambered gates and date them to the ninth century BCE, thereby effectively removing them from the commonly accepted Solomonic era and leaving the tenth century BCE to be represented by small unfortified villages.

4.5 Ashlar masonry

The origin of the architectural style using ashlar masonry, can be traced to the Late Bronze Age, and is known from the palace at Ugarit and in Cyprus, where ashlar were only used as facings. In Israel, ashlar were used as the sole building material. Earliest examples are seen in the Solomonic and Omride periods, suggesting that the Phoenicians were responsible for the introduction of this style of architecture, because of the Israelites political affiliations to Tyre. Mazar states that: 'The formal architectural style employing ashlar masonry...typifies Israelite royal buildings from the tenth century BCE until the collapse of the kingdom of Judah' (Mazar 1990:472). Mazar believes that ashlar masonry typifies the monumental architecture, which he dates to the tenth century BCE.

4.6 Pottery

A variety of new pottery shapes made an appearance in the period of the United Monarchy. A typical feature of this pottery was the abundance of red-slip and rough hand-burnish on vessels and this became a criterion of the tenth century BCE. The dating of this pottery has also recently become problematic, with some scholars suggesting down-dating the pots. This would result in the pottery and related artifacts in a stratum, now being attributed to the period of the Divided Monarchy, and not to the United Monarchy of David and Solomon.

The Philistine Bichrome pottery is understood to have represented the beginning of the Philistine settlement in the south, and excavations have shown that it had a long life. This pottery was dated to the twelfth and eleventh centuries BCE, and strata coming directly after those containing the Bichrome pottery were dated to the tenth century BCE.

Trude Dothan reckons that the pottery painted with red and black decoration is the earliest Philistine pottery and appeared during the time of Ramesses III in the early twelfth century BCE after his battles with the Sea Peoples (Mazar 1985:95). She bases her dating on the assumption that the same pottery was found in Stratum VIIA at Megiddo in the twelfth century BCE and at other sites where it occurs together with objects bearing the name of Ramesses III. According to his own inscriptions, Ramesses III was successful in halting the advance of the Sea Peoples.

Mazar however, believes that this pottery post-dates Ramesses III, and cites as evidence, Megiddo and Tell el-Far'ah, where pottery was discovered in the same contexts as datable Egyptian artifacts. In Stratum VIIA, ivories were found in the cellar of the palace, and are among the best examples of Late Bronze Age artistic tradition. A cartouche of Ramesses III was found on one of the palace ivories in this stratum, and dates this stratum to the time of Ramesses III.

Mazar says: 'The cultural and chronological milieu of Megiddo VIIA calls into question the presence of Philistine pottery in this stratum' (Mazar 1985:95). He states that the pottery Dothan analysed originated in unclear stratigraphical contexts, and was probably incorrectly dated. In Dothan's final report, she only attributes one complete Philistine vessel, and thirteen small pots sherds to this period. Mazar claims that these sherds were also found in unclear contexts, and that no Philistine pottery can be correctly attributed to this stratum.

From his examination of eighteen undisturbed loci in this stratum, Mazar found that they all contained pottery characteristic of the first Iron Age phase, with no Philistine pottery. The latest possible date for this stratum is the time of Ramesses VI in the mid twelfth century BCE. His name is found on a bronze statue base, which, although found out of context, best fits Stratum VIIA. Mazar therefore claims that the reign of

Ramesses VI is 'the *terminus post quem* for the appearance of Philistine pottery, at least at Megiddo itself' (Mazar 1985:97).

Additional information is found in the cemeteries at Tell el Far'ah, although Mazar says the interpretation of the finds is debatable. Cemetery 900 contains tombs, which fit the definition of the Iron Age IA (1200-1150 BCE) phase. They contain pottery types characteristic of the Late Bronze Age Canaanite traditions with no Mycenaean IIIB or Philistine pottery. The latest scarabs are dated to Ramesses IV in the first half of the twelfth century BCE.

Philistine pottery appears in Cemetery 500, and Dothan argues for an overlap of these two cemeteries. Mazar is convinced that Cemetery 900 represents Iron Age IA (1200-1150 BCE) preceding the Philistine pottery, while Cemetery 500 with the Philistine pottery is the succeeding phase. The scarab of Ramesses X, which was found in Cemetery 500, is contemporary with the Philistine pottery.

At Lachish, Beth-shean and Tell Sera, stratified material has been found dating to the time of Ramesses III, yet containing no Philistine pottery. Mazar believes these sites provide evidence that the Iron Age IA (1200-1150 BCE) phase preceded the Philistine pottery.

Mazar discusses the transitional Iron Age IA phase dating from the time of Tausert, or the eighth year of Ramesses III up to the reign of Ramesses VI, a short period of fifty years. Characteristics of this phase are:

- Although Egypt controls Canaan, the Canaanite culture continues in some centres.
- There is destruction and abandonment of major Canaanite cities, and new ethnic groups appear in all parts of Palestine.
- The Philistine settlement is indicated by the appearance of Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery in major Philistine cities in the Philistine Pentapolis.

- This settlement lasted until the total collapse of Egyptian rule in Canaan in the mid-twelfth century BCE. The Philistines had absorbed both Canaanite and Egyptian traditions, resulting in the appearance of the typical red and black pottery in the next 'mature' phase, which continued throughout Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE).

The Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery and Cypriote imported vessels date to the early twelfth century BCE and predate the Philistine pottery. The Late Bronze Age is characterised by imported pottery of the thirteenth century such as Mycenaean IIIB and various Cypriote imports. The transitional phase, which Mazar calls Iron Age IA, continues until the end of Egyptian domination, which is after the reign of Ramesses III and perhaps up until the reign of Ramesses VI, a period of 40-50 years. This phase is characterised by Mycenaean IIIC:1b ware, particularly at Ashdod and Ekron.

Evidence of this pottery is found in Stratum XIII at Ashdod, and it is only in Stratum XII that the black and red Philistine pottery appears. Mazar believes this pottery indicates a substantial settlement of 'Sea Peoples', and the pottery indicates the first phase of Philistine settlement.

The similarity of the Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery to that found in Cyprus leads Mazar to suggest that the Philistines came from Cyprus.

4.7 Conclusion

Certain archaeological features appear to characterise the traditional view of the United Monarchy in the tenth century BCE. Many small villages or towns were abandoned, and those that were there appear to be not very densely populated or built up.

Casemate walls or no walls were the type of fortification used in this period, with the offset-inset walls appearing later in the Iron Age, during the period of the Divided Monarchy. These offset-inset walls may have either been built on top of the casemate walls, or used together with them.

The six-chambered gates, were evident in the tenth century BCE, and may have been built earlier, or continued in use after the period of the United Monarchy, but many tenth century BCE sites show evidence of casemate walls and six-chambered gates. Ashlar masonry became the main building material in the Iron Age, and the earliest examples are evident in the tenth century BCE, in the Solomonic and Omride periods, suggesting Phoenician influence, and political affiliation with Tyre.

The pottery of the tenth century BCE is characterised by red-slipped and hand-burnished pots, with different shapes becoming evident but the dating of all is now challenged.

Currently two schools of thought appear to predominate amongst modern scholars. There are those who question the dating of the archaeological data currently attributed to the tenth century BCE and Solomon, and propose lowering the traditional dating to the ninth century BCE. They also question the value of the Bible as a historical source. Israeli archaeologists Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin, and supporters of the so-called Copenhagen School, lead by Niels Lemche and Thomas Thompson from Copenhagen and Philip Davies of Sheffield in England are among those who support this view.

The other school of thought accepts the archaeological evidence as pertaining to the tenth century BCE and the United Monarchy, and is strongly opposed to the low chronology. While accepting that the United Monarchy may not have been as grand and glorious as portrayed in the Bible, they nevertheless accept the traditional chronology of the tenth century BCE. These scholars include among others, Israeli archaeologists Amihai Mazar, Amnon Ben-Tor, and Americans, William Dever, Lawrence Stager and Seymour Gitin.

In Chapter 5 I will attempt to present and analyse the views of the Biblical Minimalists and those who question the value of the Bible as a historical source, while in Chapter 6 I will explore Finkelstein's proposed 'low chronology' and Amihai Mazar's rejection of the same. I intend to show that the traditional chronology is still to be respected, and that the Bible is still our major source for the period of the United Monarchy.

CHAPTER 5

THE VIEWS OF THE BIBLICAL MINIMALISTS.

5.1 Introduction

The Biblical Minimalists argue that David and Solomon never existed, that there was no United Monarchy and that it was all made up several centuries later. They question whether David and Solomon were mythological rather than historical and some scholars believe they were incapable of executing the large-scale building activities that Yigael Yadin attributed to them at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer. These are the more extreme views.

The question is whether or not Solomon developed these towns into fortress cities? The biblical reference says:

Here is the account of the forced labour King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

(1 Kings 9:15, NIV)

Israel Finkelstein from Tel Aviv University states that this is the verse that the United Monarchy hinges on (Finkelstein 1996:178). Yadin used this verse to confirm his findings, especially the similar city gates at Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo, but his findings should have been based on dating independent of the Bible and only linked secondarily to the biblical record.

Dag Oredsson from the University of Uppsala, Scandanavia, questions Yigael Yadin's identification of the six-chamber gates and casemate walls at Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo as Solomonic on the basis of the biblical record in 1 Kings 9:15. He believes that it is impossible to use the Bible for a historical reconstruction of this period, and claims that the archaeological remains also, 'show a very meagre material culture and a very small population in Judah during the early part of Iron Age II'

(Oredsson 1998:87). He claims that the archaeological evidence at Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE is equally as sparse, which is a position Thomas Thompson and other scholars also take (Shanks 1997b:34). William Dever disagrees, and says: 'There's a fair amount of tenth century stuff, but no monumental architecture' (Shanks 1997b:35). The Biblical Minimalists base their interpretations on the absence of archaeological data and claim that Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE was 'still centuries away from being able to challenge any of the dozens of more powerful small autonomous towns in the region' (Na'aman 1997a:43).

If it can be proved that the six-chambered gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer were erected in the tenth century BCE, then there must have been a well-developed state with a central administration capable of financing and organising such a project (Shanks 1997b:39). The traditional view is that all the gates date to the time of Solomon in the tenth century BCE (965-928 BCE), but both David Ussishkin and Israel Finkelstein, who excavated at Megiddo, claim that the six-chambered gate at Megiddo dates to the ninth century BCE and the time of Omri (882-871 BCE). William Dever however, who excavated at Gezer, dates those gates to the tenth century BCE, independently of the biblical record, on the basis of the pottery, and cites two reasons for a tenth century BCE date. The pottery dating to the time of the gate is hand-burnished, which is characteristic of the tenth century BCE, and the pottery in the destruction levels dating later than the gate is wheel-burnished, which is characteristic of the ninth century BCE. Dever also believes the gate was destroyed during Shishak's raids in 925 BCE, because although the lists do not mention Gezer, they do mention other northern cities such as Megiddo and Beth Shean. Amnon Ben-Tor, who has excavated at Hazor, is emphatic that those gates date to the tenth century BCE (Shanks 1997b:38).

Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thompson from the University of Copenhagen, as well as scholars from universities in England, Scotland and the United States, commonly known as the Copenhagen School, share a scepticism with regards to the value of the Bible in reconstructing the history to which it refers, as opposed to reconstructing the history of the period when the text was composed, centuries later. They are referred to as 'biblical revisionists', 'biblical minimalists', or sometimes

even 'biblical nihilists', but they object to these terms and prefer to be called 'historical scholars' or biblical scholars' (Shanks 1997b:28).

In an article published in 1998, Professor J le Roux, from the University of Pretoria, takes the 'minimalists' views even further, and argues that 'we do not even have a minimum. We have nothing.' He believes that 'the 'minimum' of the so-called 'minimalists' must be deconstructed even further' (le Roux 1998:477).

5.2 Perspectives on the Bible as a historical source

Are biblical archaeologists still out to prove the Bible is true, or should archaeology in Israel be an independent discipline, totally unrelated to the Bible? Yigael Yadin admitted to using the Bible as an archaeological guide, when he stated that: 'Our great guide was the Bible' (Yadin 1975:187).

Is the Bible useless as a historical source and can it only tell us about the period in which it was written? According to the minimalists, this would be the Persian or the Hellenistic period. This debate will be affected by the results of the archaeological debate regarding the tenth century.

Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thompson of the University of Copenhagen take the above view, while William Dever, professor of Near Eastern archaeology and anthropology at the University of Arizona and Biblical scholar P Kyle McCarter of John Hopkins University in Baltimore take a different view. Hershel Shanks, editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, moderated at a meeting of these four scholars (Shanks 1997b).

Thompson and Lemche say they try to get as much historical information from the sources as they can, but that this is not very much (Shanks 1997b:28). Although they do get a great deal from the Bible, they don't find it a historical record, and they object to the term 'minimalists'. They believe the Bible is valuable in learning about the intellectual history, the literary history, the theology and the self-identity of the peoples of Palestine in the second and first century BCE, which is when many of the books were edited.

Thompson believes that history is a secondary question, and that the main question is what the texts mean. How do we read and understand them? Lemche agrees that the Bible is not a historical source and is mainly valuable for understanding the mental history of the people from the time in which it was composed. It should be accepted as a piece of literature reflecting the time in which it was finished. The Biblical writers were not writing history, they did not know the genre. They did not know what fiction meant and relied on sources and traditions. According to the 'minimalists', the Bible should only be read as literature.

McCarter on the other hand believes in source-critical analysis, which identifies earlier strata in a text. He believes that the final form of the text is not the only form to which we can relate (Shanks 1997b:32). He argues that while the process of identifying these strata is difficult, there are valid methods, which can be used successfully.

William Dever attempts to combat the minimalist views, by showing how archaeology illustrates a historical Israel in the Iron Age (Dever 2000:28). He claims that the Hebrew Bible is our most important source for writing a reliable history of ancient Israel, but it has come under severe attack as a historical source in the last decade. Archaeology is another source for historiography, but is sometimes discredited by the revisionists, because it is mute. If both these sources were to be discredited, we would be left without a history of Israel.

Dever states that he is not out to prove the Bible, but 'only looking for convergences where they exist' (Shanks 1997b:32). He believes that there is no living context for the biblical text, only a literary context with archaeology providing an independent witness.

Jurie le Roux, a professor from the Department of Old Testament at the University of Pretoria, believes that we can never know Israel's past, and this is 'not owing to scanty sources but to the nature of events'. He claims that histories are only accounts 'of how different scholars understand the past from their intellectual frame of reference' (le Roux 1998:483). The event has gone forever, passed, before any sense of reason can take over, and only the account of the event is available to us. The event

is therefore inaccessible to us and no method will ever retrieve it. The sources are merely traces of the past, and le Roux states that it is 'of no avail to fall back on the sources (the Old Testament, archaeology, extra Biblical documents) as the only entrances into the past. At best they are traces which are present but also absent, illuminating but also obscuring' (le Roux 1998:483).

5.3 Conflicting viewpoints on the tenth century BCE and the United Monarchy

5.3.1 The Minimalists' perspective

Thompson denies the existence of a United Monarchy in the tenth century BCE (Shanks 1997b:34). He sees a difference in the history, origin and formation of the peoples of the northern hills and the settlement of Judah and a difference in their settlement patterns. Thompson says that in the northern hill country there is a settlement from c. 1200-900 BCE, while Judah has no settlement during this time, and only begins to be settled c. 850-800 BCE. Jerusalem is not settled until 900 BCE and Thompson says there is no evidence of a tenth century BCE Jerusalem. Fortification takes place around 950 BCE with the high chronology and 900 BCE with Finkelstein's low chronology which is discussed more fully in Chapter 6. Thompson argues: 'Without a significant population in Judea, without a city of Jerusalem, it's very, very difficult to talk about a united monarchy' (Shanks 1997b:34).

5.3.2 Dever's perspective

Dever contests the views of Thompson and says that Judah does have a significant population before 701 BCE. He claims that there are a fair amount of tenth century artifacts, although no monumental architecture has been found. He also claims that tenth century Jerusalem is an argument from silence. Lemche states that Israeli archaeologist, David Ussishkin told him in 1996, that not a single potsherd had been found in Jerusalem from the tenth century (Shanks 1997b:35), but Dever says this is because Ussishkin dates this pottery to the ninth century BCE and concurs with the proposal of a 'low chronology' advocated by his colleague Israel Finkelstein (Shanks 1997b:36 & Shanks 1998a:57).

McCarter contradicts this and says that we do have evidence, it is the evidence of a tradition, and this tradition is 'David' (Shanks 1997b:36). Tradition of course may be

fictive as is considered to be the case with Homer's two major epics of Greek antiquity, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which recount the legendary stories of the Trojan War in the twelfth century BCE. Traditionally Homer was considered to be the author of both books that are now considered to have been composed in the Greek settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor sometime in the eighth century BCE. Both books deal with legendary events that were believed to have occurred many centuries before their composition, and in 1870 the German archaeologist H Schliemann excavated what was thought to have been the ancient city of Troy. This was destructive archaeology and the Turkish government deported Schliemann. These poems are today considered to be fiction, but because of the results of Schliemann's excavations, there are still some who believe that the traditions are based on fact (Encarta 1999).

Therefore in order to be able to judge whether a tradition is fiction or not, a thorough analysis of the biblical text is necessary. It will then be possible to argue from the text, whether this reflects history or not.

Dever argues that a highly centralised government must have been responsible for the three gates at Gezer, Hazor and Megiddo. If Finkelstein's dating is correct and the gates were built in the ninth century BCE, then Solomon and the Bible can be disregarded. Once the gates are called 'Solomonic', they are immediately put into a biblical context.

Dever says the dating of the gates at Gezer was not based on the biblical story at all, but on the hand burnished pottery, which is characteristic of the tenth century. This pottery was found below certain destruction layers, while above these layers, wheel-burnished pottery was found (Shanks 1997b:42). Dever found the same sequence at Megiddo. He argues that if the topography of the sites on Shishak's list is studied, the massive destruction level seen at Gezer can only be attributed to Shishak. Dever says that if there is a Shishak destruction level at Gezer which can be dated to c. 925 BCE and one at Megiddo and also 'at Beth Shean, and in all those cases you have stratigraphy and ceramic typology that fit the picture, then I am prepared to date the hand-burnished pottery and the gates to the tenth century' (Shanks 1997b:42)

5.3.3 Na'aman's perspective

Many scholars today question the greatness of the United Monarchy, and also do not see it as an empire or kingdom in the modern sense. Nadav Na'aman, a renowned biblical-period historian from Tel Aviv University, and a colleague of Israel Finkelstein, from the same university is one such scholar, with leanings towards the 'minimalistic' point of view.

At a combined meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in 1998 in California, Na'aman, gave a historians view of the United Monarchy (Shanks 1998b:60), while recognising that the historicity of some accounts was dependent on the dates attributed to strata at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer.

Na'aman finds the biblical account of David's rise to power quite plausible, with Ancient Near Eastern parallels, but he sees 'the "empire" of David and Solomon as a temporary conquest without any tight administrative government' (Oredsson 1998:87). Na'aman believes in the historicity of David and Solomon, on account of old written sources that go back beyond the deuteronomistic redactor, maybe even to the tenth century BCE. He notes that in all the places mentioned in David's wanderings before he became king, Iron Age 1 (1200 –1000 BCE) pottery has been found.

He believes that the inscription found at Tel Dan, mentioning the 'House of David', shows that David was already regarded as the founder of a dynasty in the ninth century (Shanks 1998b:60). While recognising the historicity of the United Monarchy, he finds some of the accounts of Solomon unhistorical, and questions his 'grandeur'. Na'aman however, awaits the outcome of the debate on the strata attributed to the tenth century, before committing himself further.

5.3.4 Davies' perspective

Philip Davies, a professor of Biblical studies at the University of Sheffield in England, leans towards the revisionist school, but believes that not much separates a maximalist perspective from a minimalist perspective. He reports on a conference that was held at North-western University, outside Chicago in October 1999, to 'address a "crisis" in the study of history as described in the Bible' (Davies 2000:24).

Very learned and eminent opponents of the Copenhagen School attended the conference, and Davies noted that none of them defended the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, or of the Exodus from Egypt, although there was considerable discussion regarding the Israelites' settlement in Canaan. Few scholars still support the 'Conquest Model', and most agree that while a new people inhabited the highlands c.1200 BCE, they probably did not come from outside Canaan. They are designated 'proto-Israelites' and could have started out as indigenous Canaanites (Davies 2000:26). At some point, William Dever found himself in agreement with scholars such as Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Thompson, leading Davies to state that there is not much difference between the minimalist and maximalist perspectives. Unfortunately, the United Monarchy was not discussed, and the conference focused on the Divided Monarchy. Davies concluded that the extent of the differences is very narrow although Dever strongly disagreed with this observation.

George Ernest Wright, professor of theology at Harvard University from 1959-1972, who was also a prominent archaeologist and follower of William Albright, led excavations at Gezer and Shechem and he taught that the Biblical narratives bore witness to divine acts in history. Davies found Wright's book, *'God who acts'* (1952) 'dangerously close to fundamentalism in many respects' (Davies 2000:27), and considered that this theology left the Bible vulnerable, because if it was found to be historically unreliable, it could be regarded as worthless.

Davies believes that the revisionists have attempted to restore value to the Biblical text, by emphasising the narratives as literary constructions, whose original purpose lay in their literary character. They stress the contemporary value of the narratives.

5.4 The historical and biblical Israel from the Minimalist's point of view

Davies writes that 'the separation of the Israel of the Bible from the historical Israel as reconstructed through archaeology, anthropology and other social sciences – has led to a spectrum of views' (Davies 2000:72). He believes that the historical and the biblical Israel cannot be brought together, and that the Bible should not be considered worthless if it is not history.

The narratives were not written to record history, and archaeologists should be 'free to do archaeology without the shadow of the Bible hanging over them, as William Dever has long advocated' (Davies 2000:72). Davies agrees with Thomas Thompson, that the Bible is misread if read historically, and that the intention of the Bible is theology not history. However, theology and history should not necessarily be exclusive.

Dever categorises revisionism as postmodernism, which teaches that there is no real objective knowledge – 'There are no facts, only interpretations' (Dever 2000:30). He sees revisionism as Bible bashing and speaks scathingly of the revisionist and minimalist approaches, which Niels Peter Lemche, Thomas Thompson and Philip Davies support, but says that we cannot ignore the issues that the Minimalists raise:

- The Hebrew Bible is not the story of a historical Israel, it is the product of a crisis in Judaism, and reflects the religious interests of the writers. It is only able to reveal the writer's history.
- The narratives are myths invented by the biblical writers, and a historical Israel cannot be reconstructed from them.
- Because archaeology is largely mute, it is open to interpretation and therefore discredited.
- There was no 'early' Israel in Iron Age I, no Israelite state before the ninth century, no Judahite state before the eighth century and no political capital in Jerusalem before the second century BCE.
- There is a need to concentrate on the history of the Palestinian people, and not on 'ancient Israel'.

Jurie le Roux examines one of Davies' works, *'In search of Ancient Israel'* 1995, and focuses on the binary oppositions, which is a way of reasoning that he feels has a deteriorating effect and should be exposed. He believes that Davies' views on ancient Israel and historical Israel, biblical scholars and critical historians all exhibit this

trend, with the first having priority over the second. Le Roux believes that this 'may prejudice or restrict the work of the Biblical scholar' (le Roux 1998:480).

Le Roux argues that the 'minimum' which the minimalists say exists should be '*deconstructed* even further. It is important to indicate that we have even less than the minimum' (le Roux 1998:480). He states that we will never know Israel's past, and all we can do is depend on the historian to 'create something out of the traces and to bring about history' (le Roux 1998:483).

5.5 Conclusion

There is no denying that there are problems with the biblical text as a historical source. Israel Finkelstein notes that the 'importance of the biblical source, which dominated past research on the rise of Early Israel, has been dramatically diminished in recent years' and he goes on to say that the Bible is 'irrelevant as direct historical testimony' (Shanks 2000:6). He states that he bases his conclusions strictly on other archaeological materials and finds no evidence for Israel until after the United Monarchy, concluding that this monarchy may 'never have existed, and if it did, it was hardly a monarchy' (Shanks 2000a:64).

Dever believes that the revisionists and postmodernists are dangerous, and that they have created a relativism that makes critical enquiry almost impossible. He concludes: 'Ancient Israel is a fact. That this historical Israel does not correspond in all details with the "ideal theological Israel" portrayed in the Hebrew Bible is true. In the end however, that is irrelevant' (Dever 2000:68).

The Biblical Minimalists argue that if there is no evidence they cannot write it into history (Shanks 1997b:36). They do not deny the existence of a United Monarchy or even of Solomon, they only claim that there is no evidence to prove the existence of either. The archaeological evidence is there however, it is only the interpretations that differ. Although the biblical texts need to be thoroughly analysed in order to be able to judge whether they reflect history or not, the Bible is nevertheless an important source for archaeology, and in particular for evidence concerning the tenth century BCE, and as such it should not be disregarded.

Some of the Biblical Minimalists also disregard archaeology because it is mute and therefore open to interpretation, but if we disregard both the Bible and archaeology as historical sources, what is left? In order to reconstruct the ancient past, all sources should be analysed using modern scientific methods.

Le Roux however, believes that no method is possible to reconstruct the past, and that the past is lost to us forever. Not even a minimum remains, and all the historian can offer us is his version of the past. Maybe the past is lost to us forever, but the sources or traces are all that we have, and we need to make the most of them. All history is therefore based on interpretations, and if we want to know more about the past, it becomes necessary to analyse these interpretations and to critically examine the sources available to us, both the archaeological and the biblical evidence. In this way we may perhaps gain some insight into what happened so many thousands of years ago, and come a little closer to the 'inside' story.

CHAPTER 6

ISRAEL FINKELSTEIN'S PROPOSED NEW DATING AND AMIHAI MAZAR'S REJECTION OF THIS LOW CHRONOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

Israel Finkelstein (1996) from the University of Tel Aviv, challenges the 'traditional chronology' of the United Monarchy, and gives an 'Alternative View'. He questions whether the archaeology of the United Monarchy stands on solid ground and says his proposed alternative hypothesis 'is no less appealing and historically sound than the generally accepted one' (Finkelstein 1996:178).

Finkelstein writes of the disputes between historians and biblical scholars that have cast doubts on the historicity of the United Monarchy, but believes that the archaeological evidence has been neglected, causing the debate to become futile. Between the generally accepted upper and lower limits of the Iron Age, which are the end of Egyptian domination in the twelfth century BCE and the Assyrian campaigns in the eighth century BCE, there is 'no safe chronological anchor' (Finkelstein 1996:177). If the relevant strata could be correctly identified, we would be able to assess the material culture and settlement patterns of the tenth century BCE, and the United Monarchy more accurately.

Finkelstein believes that if the traditional chronology could have been proved beyond doubt, 'there would have been no difficulty in demonstrating that in the tenth century there was a strong, well-developed and well-organised state stretching over most of the territory of western Palestine' (Finkelstein 1996:177). He admits that, while he is not able to prove his theory, neither is any scholar able to prove the existing theory, and that his is as historically sound as the accepted one.

Amihai Mazar from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, contests Finkelstein's proposed low chronology. While he agrees that there are few chronological anchors during the Iron Age (1200-586 BCE) period in Israel, he says that Finkelstein's proposed 'low chronology' is based on flimsy evidence, which creates new problems

rather than solving the old ones (Mazar 1997:57). As stated previously, the two events that anchor the Iron Age chronology in Israel are the end of Egyptian domination in the late twelfth century BCE, and the Assyrian conquest at the end of the eighth century BCE. These two dates form the upper and lower fixed limits, and between these two points, there are very few guaranteed dates.

Shishak's raid is dated by most scholars to c. 925 BCE, and is documented in both Egyptian and biblical sources. Mazar believes that this record therefore remains one of the most reliable events for dating. Other biblically related events form subsidiary references, and there are several points of consensus in terms of dating, which Mazar quotes as:

- the dating of Stratum VIA at Megiddo to the late eleventh century BCE and
- the destruction of Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo to Shishak's raid.

(Mazar 1997:157)

6.2 The present chronological landmarks

According to Finkelstein, the chronology of the United Monarchy depends on the stratigraphy at Megiddo, the dating of the Philistine Bichrome pottery, and also the identification by Aharoni of Stratum XI at Arad with Great Arad mentioned in Shishak's list at Karnak. Finkelstein goes on to say: 'All three foundations of the archaeology of the United Monarchy have been shown to be far from reliable, undisputed chronological anchors' (Finkelstein 1996:179).

The upper anchor for the archaeology of the Iron Age is Ramesses III's activity in Canaan in the early twelfth century BCE and the Philistine settlement in the southern coastal plain, while the lower anchor is the Assyrian campaigns in the eighth century BCE. In order to positively identify strata in the 450-year interval between Ramesses III and Tiglath-Pileser III, Finkelstein gives all the evidence presently cited. The three artifacts that could possibly have helped with the dating are:

- the Mesha stone, discovered at Dhiban (biblical Dibon),
- a fragment of a stele of Shishak found at Megiddo and
- fragments of a stele found at Dan.

These were however, all found out of context, and Finkelstein rejects them as concrete evidence for dating (Finkelstein 1996:180).

6.2.1 The Mesha stone.

Monumental inscriptions incised on stone in Paleo-Hebrew script were known in Israel and Judah. Two fragments that may possibly have come from royal stelae erected in capitals like that of king Mesha of Moab were found in Jerusalem and one at Samaria. During the reign of David and Solomon, parts of Transjordan were under Israelite control. Ammon, Southern Moab and Edom were vassal states that gained their independence with the division of the kingdom of Israel, and Mesha, king of Moab freed northern Moab from Israelite control (Mazar 1990:542).

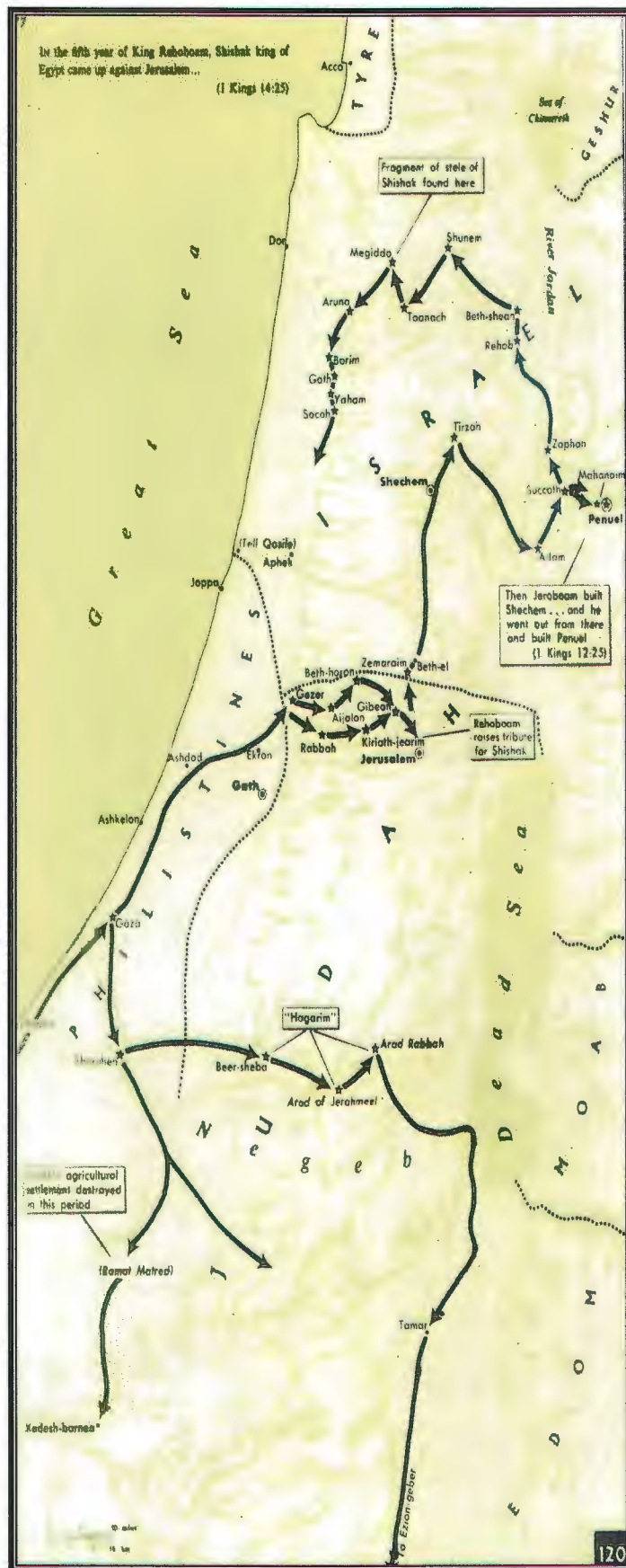
The Moabite stone, found in 1868 at Dibon, carries an Iron Age inscription, commemorating the liberation of Moab from Israelite rule by King Mesha. This stone remains a unique discovery, as excavations at Dibon have only revealed scanty remains from the time of Mesha (Mazar 1990:542).

André Lemaire of the Collège de France has found a reference to the Israelites and the kingdom of Judah (Shanks 1997c:35). Lemaire's reading tells how Mesha defeated the House of David, or dynasty of David at Hauronen in Moab. This is therefore one of the oldest references to Israel in Semitic script. The biblical minimalists claim that Judah had no standing in the ninth century BCE.

The stele also tells of towns fortified by Omri and Ahab (De Vaux 1988:231), but as the stone was found out of context on the surface at Dibon (Finkelstein 1996:180), Finkelstein rejects the stele as evidence for dating.

6.2.2 The Shishak stele

A key destruction layer at Megiddo is the invasion of Pharaoh Shoshenq (called Shishak in the Bible) in 925 BCE.



Map 3: The campaigns of Shishak 925 BCE (Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977:77).

His military campaigns shortly after the death of Solomon are recorded in a topographical list, which is preserved on the walls of the temple of Amon at Karnak in Egypt. Shishak carved a list of fifty names of cities he had conquered. Towns in the Negev, Jerusalem, Megiddo and Gaza are all mentioned (Mazar 1990:398).

Megiddo was evidently only partially destroyed, and Shishak erected a victory stele there, a fragment of which was discovered in the excavations. If the destruction of Stratum VA-IVB can be attributed to this pharaoh, then this would date the destruction of the city to the tenth century BCE. Finkelstein rejects this evidence because the fragment of stele was found in the dump debris of Schumacher's excavations (Finkelstein 1996:180).

Shishak's campaign is also recorded in the Bible, in 1 Kings 14:25-29, where he is said to have attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of the reign of Rehoboam and carried off the treasures of the temple and palace. Shishak's list and the biblical record put the date of Shishak's campaigns shortly after the death of Solomon in the late tenth century BCE.

6.2.3 The Dan stele

Fragments of a victory stele celebrating the victory of an Aramean king over Judah and Israel have been found at Tel Dan. The stele has become known as the Tel Dan Stele and been attributed to the ninth century BCE. In 1993, a large fragment, containing an Aramaic inscription, was discovered in secondary use beneath the rubble of an eighth century destruction, by Israeli archaeologist Avraham Biran who has spent twenty years excavating at Dan (Shanks 1999a:34).

The basalt fragment measures about 32cms high by 22cms wide, and the original is estimated to have been 1 metre high and 55 cms wide (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:52). The significance of this stele is that this is the first time the name 'David' or 'House of David' is used outside the Bible. Based on the fragmentary text, Biran initially ascribed the stele to the events in 1 Kings 15:16-22 and 2 Chronicles 16:1-6, naming the Aramean king, Ben-Hadad as the most likely candidate to have erected the stele (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:55).

Two additional fragments were recovered in 1994, also in secondary use, and fit into place. The new textual information contained in these fragments, which mentions an Aramean king, caused Biran to change his interpretation. He now regards the Aramean king, Hazael, king of Damascus as the author of the inscription, and attributes the stele to his time. The text tells of victories over Jehoram (851-842 BCE), king of Israel and Ahaz (843-842 BCE), king of the House of David. This supports a mid-ninth century date for the stele and belies the minimalist's claim that Judah was insignificant. The reference to the House of David suggests that the 'kings traced their descent to an actual David' (Shanks 1997c:33). Biran published his finds in the *Israel Exploration Journal* in 1995.

Because archaeologists work with fragments of the past, this is a good example of how there are no fixed and final interpretations in archaeology. Archaeologists should always be open to new interpretations and critically investigate new information (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:54).

The dating of this stele has become a contentious issue amongst scholars, as Finkelstein states that the fragments were re-used in a wall in a later stratum (Finkelstein 1996:180). Niels Lemche challenges the authenticity of the stone and declares that 'the pictures of it printed in the *Israel Exploration Journal* are fakes' (Shanks 1997b:37). William Dever, who has handled the inscription himself, declares that the inscription is genuine, and expert palaeographer and Biblical scholar, Kyle McCarter also believes that 'the Tel Dan inscription is an unlikely forgery' (Shanks 1997b:38).

6.3 The evidence of Philistine pottery for dating

The lack of Philistine Monochrome pottery found at Lachish in Stratum VI, led Finkelstein to suggest that the arrival of the Philistines must be after that date and accordingly lowering the date of the initial Philistine pottery to the end of the twelfth century BCE (Finkelstein 1996:180). Mazar, however, says that it is quite possible for pottery to be contained in the Philistine strongholds, where they could be maintaining their own cultural traits, while their neighbours, like Lachish, continued in their own traditions.

Finkelstein does not believe the Philistine urban centres would have flourished under Egyptian domination, but Mazar says that between the reigns of Ramesses III and Ramesses VI in the early twelfth century BCE, the Egyptian hold on the country was not strong. Finkelstein believes the Sea Peoples 'arrived during the time of Ramesses II and settled in the Delta, while their settlement in Philistia occurred after the reign of Ramesses VI' (Mazar 1997:159). Mazar rejects this theory, which he says has no support in either written or archaeological records.

Finkelstein's proposal to lower the date of the Philistine Monochrome pottery has led 'to a "snowball" effect' (Mazar 1997:159). The Bichrome pottery must now be dated to the eleventh century BCE, and at some sites, two strata contain such pottery. Tel Ashdod XII-XI, Tel Mique VI-V and Tel Qasile XII-XI are examples of this. Strata containing red-slipped and debased Philistine pottery, dated by most scholars to around 1000 BCE, follow these strata. These are Ashdod X, Tel Mique IV and Tel Qasile X. These three strata would have to be compressed into one century unless the date for Bichrome ware was lowered. Mazar argues that if we accept the higher date for Monochrome pottery, there is no need to lower the date for the Bichrome ware (Mazar 1997:159).

Finkelstein would like to date the traditional eleventh century BCE assemblages to the tenth century BCE, and the tenth century BCE assemblages to the ninth century BCE. This could impact profoundly on our understanding of the tenth and ninth centuries BCE in Israel and would also affect the chronology of the Phoenician and Cypriot pottery groups found at Megiddo and other sites. The eleventh century BCE strata that Finkelstein mentions are Megiddo VIA, Beth Shean S-2, Tel Qasile X, Tel Masos II and Tel Hadar. Mazar adds the related strata such as Dan V, Yoqneam XVII, Dor XII, Tel Mique IVA and others that Finkelstein does not mention.

Mazar says many of these sites show continuity with the Late Bronze Age culture and evidence of Sea Peoples' influence. Some of these sites were destroyed by fire, and these destructions are traditionally dated to the mid-eleventh, early-tenth centuries BCE, and attributed to David's conquests. Alternatively A Kempinski says the destructions could be from earthquakes (Mazar 1997:160). Finkelstein proposes lowering the date to the second half of the tenth century and attributing these

destructions to Shishak. Mazar sees no reason for this and says Finkelstein is basing his evidence solely on his views on the Bichrome pottery.

6.4 The problem of continuity in pottery production

Mazar discusses the difficulties of pottery dating in the Iron Age. Some distinct types include the 'Hippo' jar, which is typical of the tenth century BCE. These jars have been found in the Jezreel and Beth Shean valleys, and do not continue for long into the ninth century BCE.

In Iron Age II (1000-586 BCE) there was continuity in the various traditions of northern Israel, Judah, Phoenicia and Philistia, with each region developing its own traditions. There are many periods of long and slow pottery development, and Mazar says that even using advanced techniques in Carbon-14 dating, 'our ability to use pottery for "fine tuned" dating will remain limited' (Mazar 1997:162).

6.5 The value of Carbon-14 dating

Carbon-14 dating of some carbonised grain found in a bin at Beth Shean Stratum S-2, resulted in a date in the eleventh century BCE. Mazar says the testing was done with new equipment in the Carbon-14 laboratory in the Weizman Institute in Israel, and calibrated to calendric years 1128-1042 with a fifty year margin of error (Mazar 1997:165). Stratum S-2 represents the rebuilding of Beth Shean after the destruction of the Egyptian garrison town.

Mazar finds the pottery similar to that found in Stratum VIA at Megiddo and he says that 'these dates provide the first and only scientifically secure evidence for the eleventh century BCE date of these assemblages, as opposed to the late tenth century BCE date suggested by Finkelstein' (Mazar 1997:160). Mazar says this evidence also contradicts Finkelstein's proposal of an occupational gap in the eleventh century BCE, which is based on the lack of Philistine pottery at Beth Shean. Mazar believes that Carbon-14 dating, using the most advanced techniques, will in the future prove to be a useful tool for absolute chronology.

6.6 Possible anchors proposed by Finkelstein

Finkelstein believes that possible chronological landmarks are to be found at Jezreel in the north and Arad in the south. At Jezreel, the excavators dated a pottery assemblage to the mid-ninth century, and at Arad 'it seems possible to identify the stratum related to the Shishak inscription' (Finkelstein 1996:180).

6.6.1 In the south

6.6.1.1 Arad

The Philistine pottery and the mention of Arad in Shishak's list are the only two anchors for absolute chronology. Finkelstein accepts the identification of Tel Arad with the Great Arad mentioned in Shishak's list at Karnak. The late Yohanan Aharoni from Tel Aviv University, who excavated at Arad for five seasons in the 1960's identified Stratum XI as the city destroyed by Shishak in 925 BCE (Herzog et al 1987:18).

However, Orna Zimhoni's (1985) examination of the pottery from this stratum revealed similarities to that found in Stratum IV at Lachish, which post-dates the tenth century. Therefore Finkelstein and Zimhoni believe the Great Arad of Shishak's list should be identified with Stratum XII, the first Iron Age occupation of the site in the tenth century BCE, rather than Stratum XI, which would then date to the ninth century BCE.

Zimhoni (1985) and Mazar (1986) both found the pottery of Stratum X, IX and VIII to be similar and date these three strata to the eighth century. If Aharoni's dating of Stratum XI is correct, then Finkelstein says this leaves a gap in the ninth century. He therefore proposes dating Stratum XI to the ninth century and Stratum XII to the tenth century BCE, and says it is the only site 'in the entire country, which can safely be dated, on its own merits, to the tenth century BCE' (Finkelstein 1996:181).

6.6.1.2 Beer-sheba

In order to check the relative chronology, Finkelstein investigated all the main pottery forms in the southern sites of the Beer-sheba basin. Those with an early date, which included Philistine Bichrome ware and those with a later date. At Tel Masos, Stratum

II and III contained Philistine Bichrome pottery, while none was found in Stratum I, leading Finkelstein to date this level to the mid-tenth century BCE.

The enclosed settlement of Stratum VII at Beer-sheba also did not contain Bichrome pottery, which leads Finkelstein to suggest that this stratum is contemporary to Stratum I at Tel Masos in the mid-tenth century BCE. This would then put the fortified stronghold of Stratum V at Beer-sheba in the ninth century and not the tenth as originally suggested by the excavators. The enclosed settlement of Stratum VII at Beer-sheba and not the fortified stronghold of Stratum V would then represent the United Monarchy (Finkelstein 1996:181).

Finkelstein sees 'no alternative to this proposal' and therefore believes that the first fortified strongholds in the Beer-sheba valley, Stratum XI at Arad and Stratum V at Beer-sheba, were built in the ninth and not the tenth century BCE (Finkelstein 1996:181).

Finkelstein puts forward a further argument for this proposal of lowering the chronology, saying that the excavators of the southern sites, while able to identify tenth and eighth century levels, were not able to identify ninth century strata, leaving 'the ninth century as a "black hole" in the archaeological sequence' (Finkelstein 1996:181). His proposal closes this gap.

6.6.2 The highlands

Finkelstein finds no chronological anchor in the highland region where Jerusalem is the most important site for Iron II (1000-586 BCE). He claims that in Jerusalem, the traditional chronology also shows a gap in the ninth century. He dismisses Samaria from a chronological point of view, as there has been limited publication of the pottery, and what there is does not allow any sound conclusions to be made.

6.6.3 In the north

The two most important sites in the north are Megiddo and Jezreel, while Finkelstein also investigates Dan, Hazor, Gezer and Beth Shean

6.6.3.1 Megiddo

With regards to Megiddo, Finkelstein rejects the evidence of the Shishak stele, which he claims was found out of context, as well as the biblical evidence in 1 Kings 9:15, and says that the only clue for dating is provided by Philistine pottery. The Bichrome pottery was restricted to Stratum VI, with the genuine Bichrome pottery coming from VIB and degenerated forms coming from VIA (Dothan 1982:76-80). Finkelstein dates Stratum VIB to the eleventh or early tenth centuries and Stratum VIA to the mid-tenth century, the period of the United Monarchy. The destruction of this stratum could then be attributed to Shishak's campaigns, and Stratum VB would be dated to *c.* 900 BCE. The widely accepted Solomonic City of Stratum VA-IVB would be 'pushed into the ninth century' (Finkelstein 1996:183).

An added bonus to this proposed new dating would then be that the Divided Monarchy, would now be represented by two levels, Stratum VA-IVB and IVA. Dense stratigraphy is evident at Hazor and Samaria during this same time period.

6.6.3.2 Jezreel

Ahab is believed to have been the king responsible for the major building activity found at Jezreel, and the destruction is attributed to Jehu's revolt. Although we are unable to draw firm archaeological conclusions from the biblical material on Jezreel, Finkelstein believes it is difficult to understand the site against any other background.

If this assumption is correct, then Jezreel should provide important chronological information. The pottery found in the casemates would date to the mid-ninth century BCE, and Zimhoni has found similarities with this pottery and the pottery found in Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo (Zimhoni 1997:91). Finkelstein believes this could be evidence for lowering the dates of Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo thus placing the six-chambered gates at Megiddo in the ninth century BCE to correspond with the similar gates excavated at Jezreel.

6.6.3.3 Dan, Hazor, Gezer and Beth Shean

Stratum V at Dan, the main Iron Age I stratum, yielded Philistine sherds, while the Iron Age I Strata XII and XI at Hazor, did not yield any Philistine sherds. Finkelstein believes this may be a coincidence, because it is situated so far from Philistia.

The renewed excavation at Hazor may possibly change the stratigraphy, but Finkelstein says that the material found here is very different to Jezreel and Megiddo, and not easily comparable.

At Gezer, Stratum XI yielded Philistine Bichrome pottery, and the excavators recorded Stratum X as post-Philistine. Stratum IX, which is recorded as pre-Solomonic, ended in a violent destruction, which has been attributed to the pharaoh in 1 Kings 9:16. On the biblical evidence, Stratum X would have been rebuilt by Solomon in the tenth century BCE as recorded in 1 Kings 9:17.

Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.

(1 Kings 9:16-17, NIV)

Since Yigael Yadin's (1958) theory of the six-chambered gates, Stratum X has been attributed to Solomon, leaving the ninth century again as a gap. Minimal finds from this period have led to suggestions of an occupational gap. Following his Low Chronology for the Philistine pottery, Finkelstein proposes dating Strata X-IX to the tenth century, and their destruction to Shishak, and Stratum VIII, and the six-chamber gate, to the ninth century BCE. This would also close the ninth century gap in the Gezer sequence.

At Beth Shean, Stratum S-3 (Lower VI) suffered a violent destruction at the end of the Egyptian domination, in the twelfth century BCE (Mazar 1993). This corresponds to Stratum VIIA of Megiddo. Mazar dates Stratum S-2 (Upper VI), which was destroyed by fire, to the eleventh century BCE, because of similarities to Stratum VIA at Megiddo.

Finkelstein claims there is no Philistine pottery in this stratum, and therefore suggests an occupational gap in the eleventh century, after the destruction of S-3, and dates S-2 to the tenth century and the destruction to Shishak.

6.7 The evidence at different sites according to Mazar

6.7.1 Arad

Finkelstein proposes that the many strata in Israel, which are usually dated to the tenth century BCE, should now be dated to the ninth century BCE. Arad Stratum XII, is the one exception, which Finkelstein accepts as being destroyed by Shishak. Finkelstein dates Arad XII to the tenth century BCE, not on pottery, but on a 'gap' in the ninth century BCE. Mazar says: 'His reasoning is flimsy' (Mazar 1997:160). It is based on his proposal to lower the eleventh century BCE levels to the tenth century BCE, on the limited similarity of the Jezreel pottery to that of Megiddo VA-IVB, and on the lack of ninth century BCE data at many sites, causing a supposed gap in occupation levels.

Mazar argues that while these claims are valid, they 'can be satisfactorily explained without a wholesale lowering of the Iron Age chronology of Israel' (Mazar 1997:160). Mazar's dating of Arad Stratum XII to the tenth century BCE is based on the similarity of the pottery to that of other tenth century sites in the south.

6.7.2 Jezreel

Finkelstein's theory rests on the dating of the Jezreel assemblages. Jezreel was founded by Ahab in the ninth century, and because Finkelstein finds similarity with the pottery found here to that found at Megiddo VA-IVB, he suggests that this stratum, traditionally accepted as the Solomonic city, be now moved to the ninth century and the Omride dynasty.

Mazar does not accept the pottery evidence from Jezreel, and says that a detailed study is essential. Only small quantities of pottery have been found so far, and this was found in 'different stratigraphic contexts: some from constructional fills, which might contain sherds originating from a pre-Omride settlement at that site' (Mazar 1997:161).

6.7.3 Megiddo

If Finkelstein's proposal regarding Megiddo is correct, this leaves Stratum VIB in the eleventh century, Stratum VIA in the tenth and pushes the traditional tenth century

BCE Stratum VA-IVB to the ninth century BCE. Stratum IVA would then be late ninth or early eighth century BCE after the time of Ahab. Traditionally Stratum IVA is dated to the time of Ahab in the ninth century BCE.

Mazar reckons Stratum IVA must be attributed to the time of Ahab, together with the large architectural complexes that have been identified as stables by the excavators. He claims that 'their attribution to the reign of Ahab fits too well the exceptional number of 2000 chariots brought by this king to the battle of Karkar' (Mazar 1997:161). Stratum VA-IVB, and the six-chambered gate would therefore be dated to the Solomonic period, rather than the traditional dating of Stratum VA-IVB to the tenth century BCE. Mazar agrees with the excavators that the complexes identified by the excavators as stables is correct, but other scholars do not agree, and the exact function of these buildings is questioned.

Mazar also believes the gate had two periods of use, Stratum VA-IVB in the tenth century BCE and was re-used in Stratum IVA in the ninth century BCE with the offset-inset wall (Mazar 1997:161). Ussishkin has dated the gate to the ninth century BCE and Stratum IVA (Ussishkin 1980:17), and Finkelstein to the late ninth or early eighth century BCE, because of the relationship to the offset-inset wall (Finkelstein 1996:183). The debate concerning the foundations of the six-chambered gate is discussed in a separate chapter on Megiddo.

6.7.4 Lachish

Finkelstein dates Lachish Stratum V to the ninth century BCE based on oral information from Zimhoni, leaving Lachish unsettled in the tenth century BCE, an 'unfeasible conclusion concerning this major Judean site' (Mazar 1997:161). Mazar says that on his pottery analysis, Aharoni has shown convincingly that Lachish Stratum V is contemporary to Arad Stratum XII and other tenth century BCE sites.

6.7.5 Gezer

According to Mazar, Finkelstein proposes lowering the accepted Solomonic layer, Stratum VIII and the six-chambered gate, to the ninth century on unpublished data. Mazar claims that fully published data from Field VII by S Gitin has shown the pottery of Gezer VIII to be similar to that of Arad XII and Tel Qasile IX-VIII, which

are dated to the tenth century BCE, and Gezer Stratum VII to the ninth century BCE (Mazar 1997:162).

6.7.6 Kuntillet Ajrud

The pottery here includes a wide variety of forms from a limited time span. On typological comparisons, palaeographic and Carbon-14 dates, the assemblage is dated to c. 800 BCE, and is one of the few chronological anchors in the Iron Age (Mazar 1997:162). Mazar says that it also proves that a variety of forms can exist together in a short time span. Some of the forms could have existed in a tenth century BCE context, while others could have existed in a seventh century BCE context, yet they all existed simultaneously at Kuntillet Ajrud.

Mazar states that: 'The fact that such a mixture of forms could exist simultaneously reflects the complexity of ceramic stylistic development' (Mazar 1997:162). Mazar makes the point that the assemblage differs from the pottery that Finkelstein would like to date to the ninth century BCE, and goes on to say that 'A sufficient time span should be allowed to separate the Kuntillet Ajrud corpus and these earlier assemblages. Finkelstein's low chronology does not allow for this interval' (Mazar 1997:162).

6.7.7 Jerusalem

The capital of the United Monarchy has revealed the least remains from the tenth century BCE period. The 'Stepped Stone Structure' is the one of the few structures that can be dated to this time. It may have been constructed earlier, but was probably re-used during the tenth century BCE. Mazar states that not much more is presently known of tenth century Jerusalem (Mazar 1997:162). Most scholars agree that virtually no tenth century BCE remains that can be dated to David or Solomon have been uncovered.

6.8 The problem of the ninth century BCE

Mazar agrees that Finkelstein's proposed low chronology appears tempting, as it effectively closes the gap on the missing ninth century (Mazar 1997:163). At Megiddo, only two levels cover the period from tenth to eighth centuries, Stratum

VA-IVB and Stratum IVA, while at other sites there is dense stratigraphy for the same period. Hazor, has seven strata in this same period, (Strata XB-XA, IXA-IXB, VIII, VII, VI, VB and VA) and by lowering Stratum X to the ninth century BCE, the time period of each stratum becomes impossibly short. Ashdod (Strata X-VIII), Lachish (Strata V-III), Dan (Strata IV-II) and Gezer (Strata VIII-VI) have three strata, while Beer-sheba (Strata V-II) and Arad (Strata XI-VIII) have four strata.

All these sites show slow pottery development in the three centuries, and the conclusion is that in the cities with two strata or less, either there was an occupation gap, or the same city survived for more than a century. Mazar finds the latter more plausible, and says that 'the "mystery of the missing century" is a mere illusion' (Mazar 1997:163).

Although Finkelstein's proposal has nothing to do with the historicity of the United Monarchy, Mazar disagrees, and says his proposal would have a direct impact on our understanding of the United Monarchy. It would turn the tenth century BCE into 'the last phase of the Canaanite material culture continuum of the second millennium BCE' (Mazar 1997:164). Finkelstein's approach will appeal to historians who lean towards the minimalistic approach, and Mazar wonders whether Finkelstein himself is not influenced by current historical trends.

6.9 Conclusion

Finkelstein believes that his Low Chronology, has the advantage of closing the gap of the 'elusive ninth century BCE. The principal disadvantage is for Biblical History, or at least for the way we used to comprehend it' (Finkelstein 1996:184). If we accept the Low Chronology, the United Monarchy would be stripped of all its monumental buildings, which would then be dated to the Omride dynasty.

Although there were fortifications in the tenth century, Finkelstein believes that Megiddo, Gezer, Beer-sheba and Lachish would only have been fortified in the ninth century, as a result of the 'confrontation with the Aramaeans and the approaching Assyrian threat' (Finkelstein 1996:185). He concludes that 'all this has nothing to do with the question of the historicity of the United Monarchy. The kingdom of David

and Solomon could have been a chiefdom, or an early state, in a stage of territorial expansion, but with no monumental construction and advanced administration' (Finkelstein 1996:185).

Mazar agrees that the study of the settlement patterns in the tenth century BCE is exceptionally difficult, and that even the traditional chronology cannot still see the United Monarchy as an 'empire'. The archaeological picture, on the one hand, shows a slow revival of urban life, with not very densely populated cities. On the other hand, the monumental architecture suggests a rising kingdom.

Mazar however, sees no reason to lower the traditional dates by a century, and says Finkelstein's proposal 'is based on a debatable and undocumented assumption concerning the emergence of the Philistines, as well as debatable interpretation of the stratigraphic and pottery development during Iron Age II' (Mazar 1997:164). In Mazar's view, the very dense stratigraphy at Hazor prohibits lowering the tenth century there, and he ends by saying: 'In my view, Finkelstein's conclusions concerning the archaeological background of the United Monarchy are premature and unacceptable' (Mazar 1997:165).

Although Mazar objects to lowering the chronology, and argues for maintaining the traditional chronology, he nevertheless admits that even the traditional view cannot still see the United Monarchy as an empire. He does not deny the historicity of the United Monarchy, only the extent of the empire. Finkelstein also does not deny the historicity, and suggests that the United Monarchy may have been an early state or a chiefdom. The only difference appears to be that this early state would have no monumental architecture in the tenth century BCE, because the low chronology would have effectively moved this to the ninth century BCE.

CHAPTER 7

TENTH CENTURY EVIDENCE AT JERUSALEM

7.1 Introduction

The City of Jerusalem was the capital of the United Monarchy, and later the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah during the period of the Divided Monarchy. According to the biblical records, Jerusalem was considered to be the Holy City, the centre of the cult of Yahweh, the city that David captured from the Jebusites and where Solomon built his palace and the Temple of Yahweh. The nationalist theology, which originated at the beginning of the time of the kings, and was supported by the Zaddokite priests, emphasised the inviolability of the Davidic dynasty, the temple and Jerusalem. This city was of tremendous significance to the Israelites, and played an important role in the religion, politics and culture of the Jews from the days of the United Monarchy up until the present time.

There has been so much controversy over the historicity of the United Monarchy, that Hershel Shanks says the questions we now need to re-address are what the city of Jerusalem was like when David captured it in about 1000 BCE, and what it was 'like during the glorious reigns of David and Solomon' (Shanks 1998c:25). These are the questions that need to be answered concerning Jerusalem, and some scholars go so far as to say that the history of Jerusalem needs to be re-written.

Certain scholars have argued that the city did not exist in this period. Archaeologist Margaret Steiner (1998) takes this view, and is re-examining Kathleen Kenyon's reports of her excavations in 1961-1967. Kenyon died before publishing her final report. Steiner has supervised excavations in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and is currently working on Kenyon's work with Henk Franken at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

Other scholars challenge this view. Archaeologist Jane Cahill (1998), who is examining the reports of Yigal Shiloh's excavations, says that the archaeology proves

that there was a city, and the historian Nadav Na'aman (1998), says that the ancient texts prove it.

Shanks writes that although Jerusalem is one of the most excavated cities in the world, it has produced almost no tenth century remains, making Jerusalem Exhibit A to the minimalists who deny any historicity to the biblical events attributed to the tenth century (Shanks 2000b:34). Unfortunately much of the city remains unexcavated due to Muslim occupation.

Nadav Na'aman, Tel Aviv University historian, believes that there must have been a city there, and that the archaeological evidence is either gone, or undiscovered. He says there is just as little evidence for the fourteenth century BCE city, yet Jerusalem is known to have existed then, because of the cuneiform tablets from Tell el-Amarna in Egypt. These consist of roughly three hundred tablets containing the diplomatic correspondence between the local Canaanite rulers and the Egyptian pharaohs. 'Urusalim' features prominently in the correspondence (Na'aman 1997a: 44).

Shanks admits that very little evidence has been recovered from the other centuries as well. The Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE), Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE) and the beginning of Iron Age II (1000-586 BCE), have all produced very little archaeological evidence. This is a period of nearly one thousand years, and Shanks concludes by saying that if Jerusalem was not abandoned, then the existing data obviously does not tell the whole story (Shanks 2000b:34). Not all scholars agree with Shanks' statements concerning the paucity of evidence, and the historian, Nadav Na'aman (1998) and archaeologist, Jane Cahill (1998) both produce evidence for Iron Age Jerusalem.

7.2 Location

Jerusalem is situated in the mountainous area of Judah, surrounded by hills and is built on a number of ridges separated by deep valleys. Its topographical situation had a direct influence on the appearance of the city and on its defences. Although major trade routes did pass through Jerusalem, the main trade route, the *Via Maris*, bypassed Jerusalem thus semi-isolating the city from foreign influences and protecting it

from hostile forces. The topography of the city has also been a decisive factor in the selection of excavation sites.

The ancient City of David is built on an elongated narrow ridge, south of Mount Moriah, where Solomon is believed to have built the first temple. This ridge is referred to as the Ophel, and is said to have accommodated the Jebusite city which was captured by David, and which later became known as the City of David. The Kidron Valley which gives rise to the major water source, the Gihon Spring, lies to the east of the Ophel, while to the west, lies the Tyropoeon Valley (Nel *et al* 1987:28).

There has been much controversy over the boundaries of ancient Jerusalem up until the end of the monarchy, and in which period the settlement spread to the western and eastern hills. Prof N Avigad uncovered the remains of a massive city wall, seven metres wide, which he dated to the late eighth century BCE, on the evidence of the pottery and stratigraphy. This wall has become known as the Israelite city wall and indicates a permanent settlement on the western hill in that period. The significance of the wall is that it was constructed on the ruins of earlier Israelite houses, indicating that the city had extended to the western hill before the wall was built. Therefore an unfortified settlement existed on the western hill before the eighth century BCE (Avigad 1984:45).

7.3 Excavation History

Excavations in Jerusalem have been in progress for over 130 years, but the methods and approaches have not always corresponded and some have caused considerable damage. The Palestine Exploration Fund was founded in 1865, and the object of the fund was to ensure systematic and accurate excavations in Palestine and particularly in Jerusalem.

Since 1948, after the foundation of the State of Israel, numerous excavations have taken place. From 1968 until the present, the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, Israel Museum, Jerusalem City Museum and the Department of Antiquities are but a few of the institutions responsible for excavations in and around

Jerusalem. The Temple Mount, the City of David, the Ophel and the boundary walls are some of the areas they concentrated on.

7.3.1 Charles Warren

Shortly after the establishment of the PEF in 1865, Captain Charles Warren and Lieutenant Anderson attempted to compile accurate maps of Jerusalem as a preliminary to commencing excavations in the city. Charles Warren's excavations were hampered by the difficult political times in Palestine. Initially he concentrated on the walls around the temple courtyard, which dated to Herodian times, and his excavation technique consisted of digging a deep vertical shaft, about six metres from the wall, and then tunnelling through the rubble to the base of the wall.

Warren was responsible for various other discoveries, such as Hezekiah's Tunnel or the Siloam Tunnel built in the late eighth century BCE and in 1867 the 16m vertical shaft connecting the Gihon Spring with the Jebusite city. This shaft came to be known as 'Warren's Shaft', and was thought to be the shaft that Joab, King David's general climbed to capture the city. In the 1980's Yigal Shiloh stated that the dating of the shaft was later than David's time and was therefore not used in the conquest of Jerusalem. Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron who recently excavated in the City of David, insist that the shaft was never used to draw water and that Joab did not enter the city through the shaft (Shanks 1999c:31).

Warren's principal contribution to Jerusalem's history lay in the discovery of a wall, which extended southward along the slope of the hill and dated to Byzantine times. This wall was excavated 100 years later by Kathleen Kenyon, who found it to be built on top of a much older wall, proving that Jerusalem extended much further south than initially assumed (Nel *et al* 1987:34), thus indicating that the city was much more extensive in the Israelite period than had previously been believed.

7.3.2 Clermont-Ganneau, Henry Maudsville and H Guthe

In 1873, Clermont-Ganneau, Henry Maudsville and H Guthe investigated tombs, aqueducts and remains of buildings on behalf of the PEF, but failed to make any significant contribution.

7.3.3 Frederick J Bliss

An American, FJ Bliss, headed another excavation for the PEF between 1884-1887. He did not undertake stratigraphic excavations, but followed Warren's method of sinking a shaft. He followed the wall along the Hinnom Valley, and found proof that this had continued around the Western Hill to the Tyropoeon Valley. Here they struck a section of a massive wall, which extended from the southern-most point of the Old City of David to the Western and Eastern Hills, thus putting the southern section of Jerusalem on the map. He was unable to date the walls correctly with his technique, and his dating was therefore uncertain and often inaccurate. His accurate drawings however, have enabled today's archaeologists to re-evaluate and re-interpret the data

7.3.4 Excavations between 1911 and 1927

- An expedition led by Parker in 1911 proved unproductive, and the results were not published. The workers are reported to have fled while searching for temple treasures, but they did however clear out the silt from the Siloam Tunnel.
- In 1913-1914, R Weill led an expedition, sponsored by Baron Edmond de Rothschild in the area at the southern end of the Eastern Hill. Stratigraphic excavation techniques were not used and they were unable to interpret their findings accurately.
- Between 1923-1925, RAS Macalister, explored the summit of the Eastern Ridge on behalf of the British School of Archaeology, which had close ties with the PEF, but his excavation method of trenching destroyed all stratigraphic evidence.
- In 1927, on behalf of the PEF, JW Crowfoot continued Macalister's excavations, and cut a trench into the Central Valley, where he hit an imposing gateway, which he dated to the Bronze Age and the Jebusites, but which later proved to be Maccabean.

Archaeology is destructive, and these early excavations have destroyed much of the stratigraphic evidence. The discoveries that were made were either not reported, or inaccurately reported. Unfortunately the importance and significance of Jerusalem has led to many expeditions, often by unqualified persons, leaving a muddle of information that needs to be investigated using modern scientific methods.

7.3.5 Kathleen Kenyon

British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon conducted large-scale excavations in the City of David between 1961-1967 on behalf of the British School of Archaeology. She was the first archaeologist to employ stratigraphic techniques, thus making a valuable contribution by elucidating and correcting some of the results of previous excavations. She worked on the northern and western boundaries of Jerusalem, and on the Eastern Hill and she questioned Macalister's dating of the summit wall to the Jebusite and Davidic periods (Nel *et al* 1987:39).

Kenyon stated that there was nothing more to be gained by further excavations in the Old City, but two excavations, those of Yigal Shiloh and the continuing excavations of Ronnie Reich and Eli Shukron of the Israel Antiquities Authority, 'have now proved her wrong on this point and disputed many of her findings' (Shanks 1999b:25). Kenyon died in 1978 before completing her final excavation report.

7.3.6 Yigal Shiloh

In 1978, Israeli archaeologist Yigal Shiloh of the University of Jerusalem, commenced excavations in the City of David, with the aim of collecting information concerning Bronze and Iron Age Jerusalem. He excavated there until 1985, and discovered the remains of a settlement dating back 5 500 years, as well as a portion of a Jebusite fortress, and a monumental structure now known as the Stepped-Stone Structure.

Shiloh considered that the Stepped-Stone Structure was built in the tenth or ninth centuries BCE as a supporting rampart for some other structure at the summit of the hill, but he died in 1987 before completing his final excavation report, and several of his conclusions are being questioned today (Shanks 1999b:25). American

archaeologist Jane Cahill (1998) is re-examining the reports of Shiloh's excavations and preparing to publish her conclusions.

7.3.7 Benjamin Mazar and Nachman Avigad

After the six-day war in 1967, the Old City became a protected antiquities site, and archaeological investigation was necessary before any new construction took place. Two major excavations took place in the present Old City between 1968-1983.

Between 1968-1977, Professor Benjamin Mazar was able to excavate on sites that were previously prohibited. He directed excavations south of the Temple Mount on the Ophel, but most of his discoveries date to the Herodian period.

Between 1969-1983, Professor Nachman Avigad of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem concentrated on the Jewish quarter of the present Old City. The excavations took place in extremely difficult conditions and over long periods of time, prohibiting much of the analysis of the finds.

Both Mazar and Avigad died without writing final reports, and teams of archaeologists in Jerusalem are currently working on the evidence recorded (Steiner 1998:26).

7.3.8 Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron

Excavations in the City of David were renewed in 1995 by the Israel Antiquities Authority in celebration of the 3000 year anniversary of David's capture of Jerusalem. Rescue digs were carried out where new constructions were to take place.

Reich is the director of the excavations for the Israel Antiquities Authority's Jerusalem 3000 project. He has been excavating at Robinson's Arch on the Temple Mount, at the City of David, at the Dung Gate and outside the Jaffa Gate since 1994. He is also a senior lecturer at Haifa University.

Archaeologist, Eli Shukron, who trained at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, assisted Reich on the project outside the Jaffa Gate, and conducted the rescue excavation at Pisgat Zeev, north of Jerusalem.

Reich and Shukron's recent excavations at the Gihon Spring have caused them to state that 'Warren's shaft never served as a water shaft....Ancient Jerusalem indeed had a complicated underground water system. But Warren's Shaft was never part of it' (Reich & Shukron 1999:24).

7.4 The Archaeological Evidence

Although archaeologists disagree about the dating, the Stepped-Stone Structure, which obviously served as a support for a major building construction, is evidence that Jerusalem was capable of impressive architectural achievements, and was a significant city with a substantial population. Dates range from the thirteenth century to the tenth centuries BCE. Late Bronze Age tombs as well as an Egyptian Temple (refer 8.4.4) have been discovered outside Jerusalem, indicating a settlement there.

There have been problems defining the boundaries of Jerusalem during the period of the United Monarchy, and a number of views are evident. The maximalist's view of early Jerusalem is based on the historical-literary sources, such as Josephus' description of the city wall which enclosed the Western Hill, and which Josephus attributes to David and Solomon. The minimalists on the other hand, reject this enlarged Jerusalem as being too large for an Iron Age city, and attribute the wall to the Hasmonean period. Their principal argument however, is based on the negative finds on the Western Hill. Kenyon supported the minimalist approach, and also believed that stratigraphical excavations were not practical or possible in the Old City.

Yigal Shiloh challenged Kenyon's views on stratigraphical excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem. He said that although certain periods are missing from the archaeological record, this does not mean that the site was unoccupied at these times. There may be evidence of these periods in areas yet to be excavated. Shiloh said that Kenyon failed to appreciate the fact that not all excavation levels show up in each square (Nel *et al* 1987:57). He was an advocate of the maximalist approach.

Nadav Na'aman challenges the 'minimalist' or 'revisionist' approach to Iron Age Jerusalem and the United Monarchy, and says that the arguments of the revisionists are negative (Na'aman 1997a:43). They view the Biblical evidence as worthless,

because it was written hundreds of years after the events that it describes and they only rely on non-biblical sources and archaeological evidence to reconstruct a history of ancient Israel. As they claim this evidence is virtually non-existent for tenth century Jerusalem, a history is also impossible.

Na'aman says the revisionists are wrong about the archaeological evidence, as both Kenyon and Shiloh excavated sections of walls, which they date to the tenth century, and Shiloh uncovered the Stepped-Stone Structure that he dated to this period.

Na'aman agrees that most of the tenth century remains come from the City of David, while no pottery from this period has been found in other areas. The revisionists conclude from this that Jerusalem was a small provincial town, but as Na'aman points out, the most likely place to find public buildings and monuments would be the Temple Mount, where it is currently impossible to excavate (Na'aman 1997a:43).

Also, the City of David was continuously inhabited from the tenth to the sixth centuries, but Jerusalem was built on terraces and bedrock, and 'each new city destroyed what was underneath, robbed and re-used stones from earlier buildings, and set its foundations on the solid rock' (Na'aman 1997a:44). Previous strata would have been destroyed by these activities, which would explain the lack of evidence.

7.4.1 Boundary Walls

On the eastern slope of the City of David, Kenyon found about 30 metres of wall from the Middle Bronze II (2000-1550 BCE) period. The wall was re-used in later periods and Shiloh found an additional 60 metres of this wall, with a base of nearly 3 metres, showing that Jerusalem was a strongly fortified city with a massive solid wall from c. 1800 BCE onwards. This wall is thought to have served the city for more than 1000 years until the Babylonian destruction. When the exiles returned, they built a new wall higher up the slope (Nel *et al* 1987:57).

7.4.2 The Stepped-Stone Structure

The Stepped Stone Structure consists of a mantle of stones and some adjoining stone towers laid out over the Iron Age I terrace system on the east of the hill. Originally

this must have stood 27m tall and 40m wide at the top, which makes it by far the largest and most impressive structure of its kind (Steiner 1998:29).



Illustration 3: Jerusalem. View of the ‘Stepped Stone Structure’ in the City of David. (Mazar 1990:375)

The structure may have been the result of centuries of building, and the dating is another hotly disputed issue. The earliest constructions are the terraces, which consist of seven retaining walls running parallel to the hill, and about ten perpendicular walls. The compartments thus formed were filled with boulders and soil to create flat platforms that served as a substructure for some massive construction.

The Late Bronze II city (1300-1200 BCE) was basically the Canaanite-Jebusite city that David is said to have captured c. 1000 BCE. It was from this city that Shiloh discovered what is thought to have been the base of the Fortress of Zion, which was built in the thirteenth century BCE. According to the biblical accounts:

Nevertheless David captured the Fortress of Zion, the City of David. On that day, David said, 'Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those "lame and blind" who are David's enemies. This is why they say, "the blind and lame" will not enter the palace.' David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward.

(2 Samuel 5:7-9, NIV)

David and all the Israelites marched to Jerusalem, that is, Jebus. The Jebusites who lived there said to David, "You will not get in there." Nevertheless, David captured the Fortress of Zion, the City of David...David then took up residence in the fortress, and so it was called the City of David. He built up the city around it, from the supporting terraces to the surrounding wall, while Joab restored the rest of the city.

(1 Chronicles 11:4-8, NIV)

Because of the terrain, the Jebusites built a system of stone terraces to form a massive stone sub-structure for their citadel. Shiloh found no superstructure, but these may be preserved at the top of the slope underneath present-day Arab houses. Only a few remains were found of the Iron Age I city (Nel *et al* 1987:57).

After David's conquest of the city, the 'Citadel of David' was built on top of the Jebusite citadel, and the Israelites constructed the massive Stepped-Stone Structure that still covers the Jebusite citadel substructure. This 'has been preserved to a height of nearly 50ft and is surely one of the most impressive Iron Age monuments in Israel' (Shanks 1985:36). If this structure can be dated to David and the tenth century BCE, then this gives credence to the argument for Jerusalem as an important city in David's time. The date of this structure is however challenged. The views of Margaret Steiner, who is examining Kathleen Kenyon's reports, and Jane Cahill who is re-evaluating Shiloh's reports are discussed further on.

7.4.3 Recent excavations at Warren's Shaft

New excavations near the Gihon Spring by Reich and Shukron have required a re-assessment of the traditional views on David's capture of the Jebusite city and on the underground water system of Jerusalem in that period.

Warren's shaft and associated tunnels was thought to provide safe access to the Gihon Spring without going outside the city. The Gihon Spring was Jerusalem's only natural water source, and as such, essential for the inhabitants of the city, especially so if the city were under siege.

Warren's shaft was also considered to be the shaft by which David's general, Joab, gained access into the city, surprising the Jebusites and conquering Jerusalem. One of their questions revolves around the dating of the shaft, and whether this existed when David conquered the city, or only later when underground water systems were being built at other sites? (Reich & Shukron 1999:25).

The biblical account in 2 Samuel 5:8, mentions the water shaft, but the account in Chronicles only states that Joab led the attack, there is no mention of a water shaft. The dating of this is now also challenged.

David had said, "Whoever leads the attack on the Jebusites will become commander-in-chief." Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, and so he received the command.

(1 Chronicles 11:6)

In the 1960's Kenyon's excavations on the eastern slope of the City of David caused her to claim that the Shaft system began inside the city and ended outside the walls. In his excavations in the 1970's and 1980's, Shiloh paid particular attention to Warren's Shaft and cleared the entire system of debris, opening it to the public. Shiloh concluded that the tunnels 'were enlarged by man, but that the paths were fixed by nature,' and that the system was not cut until the Israelite period, so it could not have been Joab's access into Jerusalem (Reich & Shukron 1999:25). He based his

dating on an analogy to the water systems at Hazor and Megiddo and not on the pottery, which had already been removed prior to his excavations.

Reich and Shukron were carrying out rescue digs in the City of David, where new construction sites were about to take place, and were asked to complete such a dig at the Gihon Spring, before the municipality went ahead with the construction of a Visitor's Centre next to the springhouse over the Gihon Spring.

They had to dig through metres of debris dumped there in the Second Temple period, before encountering 'the remains of some monumental rock cuttings and construction' (Reich & Shukron 1999:27), and recognised that they might well have come across the remains of a monumental tower built around the spring as protection. The masonry consisted of huge blocks of undressed stone that had survived up to four courses in places. This would have provided Jerusalem with a secure water supply. They also discovered a conduit, which channelled the water out of the tower and along the eastern side of the City of David into pools at the southern end of the city.

A few metres from the start of the conduit, a large deep rectangular pool was discovered, and evidence of further monumental masonry similar to the tower next to the spring. Reich and Shukron question whether this impressive complex was in use when David conquered the city c. 1000 BCE? Potsherds found on the floor of these towers date to the Middle Bronze II (2000-1550 BCE) period and Reich and Shukron believe that the tower fortifications were part of a defensive plan for the city constructed in the eighteenth to seventeenth century BCE. Both Kenyon and Shiloh had discovered sections of a massive city wall dating to this period.

On returning to the Warren's Shaft system, Reich and Shukron found that it had been dug in two phases, with a thousand year interval between. With Reich and Shukron's discovery of the massive Tower system, the assumption that the tunnel was dug at one time to provide safe access to the waters of the Spring, has been severely tested, and they propose a different scenario. Initially an underground tunnel was cut, connecting the city with the cave beyond Warren's Shaft and the pool and massive tower. Warren's Shaft was not visible to the diggers, and only long after the tunnel was initially cut was the Shaft, a natural fissure, accidentally discovered.

Reich and Shukron claim that the Shaft was never used to draw water, as it is filled with protrusions that make it difficult to lower a bucket, and the spring at the bottom was not deep enough to allow a bucket to fill with water. They believe that the second phase of cutting was in the eighth century BCE as indicated by the pottery, but they have no answer as to whether the system was in any way associated with the *tsinnor* or shaft referred to in the Bible, or not. Whether Joab or David did indeed gain access to Jerusalem through the water system is still unclear, but Reich and Shukron believe that Warren's Shaft was not part of the plan. The biblical accounts (2 Samuel 5:8 and I Chronicles 11:6) are contradictory.

7.4.4 Egyptian temple

Gabriel Barkay, a senior lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, whilst not wishing to enter into the debate on the chronology of the United Monarchy, shows 'how chancy it is to base an argument on the absence of data' (Barkay 2000:49).

Egyptian texts record how Egypt controlled Canaan and the city of Jerusalem through local rulers in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE). The 'maximalists' who believe the Bible contains valuable historical information, say that this shows Jerusalem was a city with political significance. It could well have been the influential capital of David's kingdom, as the Bible says. The 'minimalists' say there is hardly any archaeological evidence from the tenth century BCE in Jerusalem, despite extensive excavations.

Barkay accidentally came across evidence of an Egyptian Temple while studying two large burial caves north of the Old City of Jerusalem on the grounds of the French Dominican Monastery of St Etienne. His research required him to read all the literature relating to previous excavations and while doing so he came across the description of a small stele with Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. The fragment was published incorrectly in several reports, but Barkay found a photograph of the inscription among material from Beth-shean and finally located the fragment at the Ecole Biblique.

The inscription was enough to encourage further research into old records and artifacts, and Barkay discovered two finely crafted Egyptian alabaster vessels that

were never published, but found in the excavations. These dated to the eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty (1575-1308 BCE) (Barkay 2000:53). He also discovered a stone slab which had been found below the floor of the Byzantine church and which had confused the excavators, but which Barkay classified as an Egyptian offering table, giving him additional evidence for an Egyptian Temple. An Egyptian serpentine statuette found in 1975 in the garden of the monastery shows a male figure seated in a chair, and can definitely be identified as Egyptian because of its shape and material. This statue dates to the New Kingdom (1570-1200BCE), and may be the god Amnon or Ptah.

From all this evidence Barkay concludes that there was probably an Egyptian temple there in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE), on the main road from Jerusalem to Shechem. If there was a temple there, there must have been a town or city as well, indicating habitation there in the Late Bronze Age. His finds also indicate how dangerous it is to base arguments on the absence of data.

7.5 Controversy concerning the absence of evidence

To archaeologists, the main problem appears to lie in the lack of pottery discovered. Shanks agrees that this is a problem, and that the pottery finds have not been abundant, but there has been some pottery found, although none has been adequately published (Shanks 2000b:36). Yigal Shiloh's excavations in the 1970's and 1980's, and Kathleen Kenyon's in the 1960's have both produced pottery from the Late Bronze Age and also from the tenth century BCE. Benjamin Mazar's excavation south of the Temple Mount has produced 'an intact black juglet...that is characteristic of the tenth century' (Shanks 2000b:36). On the basis of this, the fortifications are dated to the tenth century BCE and the time of Solomon.

Shanks believes that the question of why so little pottery has been recorded, is that the excavators may have thrown out much of the evidence, because the question of the historicity of the United Monarchy was not at that stage such a burning question. The evidence of Jerusalem in this period was not questioned. Today, none of the areas where we might expect to find remains are available for excavation, because Muslim religious buildings and private homes are built above possible sites.

Margaret Steiner who is re-evaluating Kathleen Kenyon's reports, and Jane Cahill who is re-evaluating Yigal Shiloh's reports hold opposing views on the tenth century BCE.

7.5.1 Steiner's evaluation of Kenyon's excavations

Margaret Steiner, who is re-examining the evidence and preparing the final report of Kenyon's excavations in Jerusalem, believes that the city did not exist during the period of the United Monarchy (Steiner 1998). She states that the history of Jerusalem will have to be re-written, and that the previous assumptions of the past need to be questioned. The major problem lies in the fact that the directors of all four major excavations in the city died without writing final reports. Steiner is examining Kenyon's reports and making 'a stratigraphical analysis, dating the pottery and writing a historical interpretation of the results' (Steiner 1998:26). From her research she implies that the evidence is simply not there. She investigates the Late Bronze Age IIB (1300-1200 BCE), Iron Age I (1200-100 BCE) and the tenth century BCE.

7.5.1.1 Late Bronze Age IIB (1300-1200 BCE)

Steiner claims that most of the Late Bronze Age material from Jerusalem has come from tombs, especially on the Mount of Olives where hundreds of pots were discovered, and the remains of what might have been an Egyptian Temple (Barkay 2000). She says that no remains of a town have been found – no wall, no gate and no houses. A century of excavations has failed to produce any archaeological evidence from this period.

Na'aman quotes the fourteenth BCE century Amarna letters, which refer to 'URUSALIM' as evidence of a settlement, but Steiner disregards the Bible and the Amarna letters as difficult to interpret (Steiner 1998:27).

Steiner says that there are three possible reasons for lack of evidence, either:

- not enough has been excavated, or
- all remains have eroded or were dug away, or
- there were no remains.

She attempts to argue the points as follows:

- Four deep trenches, those of Raymond Weill, JW Crowfoot, Kathleen Kenyon and Yigal Shiloh all exposed bedrock, and produced no Late Bronze architecture. Several excavations around the Old City have also produced negative results.
- If the evidence had eroded or been dug away, potsherds would have survived. Potsherds from Middle Bronze (2000-1550 BCE) and Iron II (1000-586 BCE) are abundant, but miniscule amounts from the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE) are recorded.
- If there were no remains, then what about the evidence of the Amarna letters, which do exist. Steiner says that 'Urusalim' may not have been a city, but a small estate protecting the route to Beth Shean and supplying the Egyptian pharaohs with slaves.

(Steiner 1998:28)

7.5.1.2 Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE)

Steiner says that except for the biblical sources, the historical sources from this period are non-existent. The Bible portrays Jerusalem as a small well-fortified town inhabited by the Jebusites, but the archaeological situation is the same as the Late Bronze Age. Steiner claims that there is no evidence to say that a city existed here (Steiner 1998:29).

7.5.1.3 The Tenth Century BCE

Steiner admits that there is some architecture from the tenth century, such as the Stepped-Stone Structure, pottery and other artifacts. The Stepped-Stone Structure is laid out over an Iron Age terrace system, but is not connected to it. On the basis of the pottery found in the fills, she dates the terraces to the twelfth century and the Stepped Stone Structure to the tenth century, together with portions of a casemate wall, proto-aeolic capitols and fine ashlar. Kenyon found these in the destruction debris of the Stepped Stone Structure (Steiner 1998:30).

Sherds discovered with criss-cross burnishing were thought to date to the tenth century, but only one has the dark red-slip characteristic of the tenth century. Steiner says that the finds at Jerusalem indicate the existence of defensive walls, fortifications, public buildings but no houses. Steiner claims that there is no evidence from the tenth century that people lived there, and that it may have been a public administrative centre. She also says that if the dating of the urbanisation of Jerusalem is lowered, then David and Solomon could not have built it and 'there is simply no saving them' (Steiner 1998:32).

Steiner concludes by saying that sometime in the tenth or early ninth centuries BCE, Jerusalem became a small town, which covered no more than 12ha and consisted mainly of public buildings, as in a regional administrative centre, or a capital of a small newly established state. It was not likely that Jerusalem was the capital of a large state like the United Monarchy, which is described in the biblical texts.

Other towns such as Megiddo, Gezer, Hazor and Lachish also evidence the same characteristics, such as large fortifications, ashlar masonry, public buildings and hardly any residential areas. She considers these as seats of government of small regional states that only later fused into the historically attested states of the Divided Monarchy. According to Steiner, the United Monarchy is not a historical fact (Steiner 1998:33), and this is one of the reasons that the history of Jerusalem will have to be re-written as more and more evidence is uncovered, calling 'into question long-held assumptions about the city's past (Steiner 1999:26).

7.5.2 Cahill's reply to Steiner on the evidence of Shiloh's reports

As opposed to Steiner, Jane Cahill believes that the archaeological evidence proves that Jerusalem was there in David's time and before (Cahill 1998:34). She is re-evaluating Shiloh's excavation reports and preparing her conclusions for publication.

She claims that Steiner ignored the published evidence, and failed to accurately present the evidence from Kenyon's excavations, which she used to support her conclusions. She also failed to critically evaluate the evidence that she did present.

Cahill is uncomplimentary with regards to Steiner's views, and says:

Steiner offers her readers startling historical conclusions that are not substantiated by the archaeological record, that appear to contradict evidence she herself has published elsewhere and...that perpetuate the propensity of some archaeologists to publish sensational claims while maintaining exclusive access to unpublished evidence so that other scholars cannot independently evaluate the evidence.

(Cahill 1998:34)

Cahill challenges Steiner on two points:

- Steiner claims that most of the Late Bronze Age pottery was from tomb deposits.
- Steiner admits that an Egyptian Temple may have existed north of the Old City, and then says that no remains of a town were discovered.

In her reply to Steiner, Cahill investigates the same three periods that Steiner reported on, Late Bronze Age IIB (1300-1200 BCE), Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE) and the tenth century BCE.

7.5.2.1 Late Bronze Age IIB (1300-1200 BCE)

Cahill states that architectural remains from the Late Bronze Age have been found in Shiloh's excavations, Area G. Stratified remains containing pottery and other artifacts have been found in three additional areas in the City of David, Kenyon's Trench A and Site P and Shiloh's Area E1. She says that Steiner herself published pottery from the Late Bronze Age in 1990 (Cahill 1998:34).

Kenyon found that the lowest levels in Site P dated to the Late Bronze Age and that in some areas, the remains reached half a metre in depth. Steiner did not mention Kenyon's habit of examining and discarding pottery, keeping only the rims of the pots. Shiloh also mentioned remains from the Late Bronze Age, although sparse, and Cahill therefore says Steiner's 'miniscule' amounts of pottery are false and 'her

quantitative analysis does not appear to be either well founded or statistically valid' (Cahill 1998:35).

Cahill believes that the Stepped-Stone Structure and terraces are contemporary, because the pottery from the terrace fills and the Stepped-Stone Structure's rubble core are identical, and she interprets these as a single architectural unit. She states that most of the pottery from Shiloh's excavations dates to the Late Bronze Age and Middle Bronze Age and not to Iron Age 1 and consequently dates the structure to the late thirteenth or early twelfth centuries BCE.

Cahill says that the lack of completed excavation reports and 'the sparse and fragmentary preservation of the remains' (Cahill 1998:35) are negative features of the archaeological record and not negative evidence that there was no settlement there.

Steiner found no walls, gates or fortifications, but Cahill says that this is not a period when city walls were constructed. Cities and towns remained unfortified or Middle Bronze Age fortifications were re-used. In most Late Bronze Age settlements the city wall is absent, and the situation in Jerusalem is consistent with this pattern. The Late Bronze Age is characterised by settlement decline, and although the remains in Jerusalem are sparse, they are present (Cahill 1998:36).

Stone was and still is the most common building material in Jerusalem, and the builders regularly excavated down to bedrock, preventing accumulation of superimposed archaeological strata and also destroying the archaeological record. Extensive quarrying is evident in the Roman and Byzantine periods, therefore absence of evidence does not mean there was no town this period, 'it means only that the archaeological record has not been sufficiently preserved, that it has not yet been sufficiently developed and that we do not yet possess the expertise needed to interpret it' (Cahill 1998:36).

7.5.2.2 Iron Age I (1200 – 1000 BCE)

Cahill says that Steiner's treatment of Iron Age 1 also fails to present evidence or to critically evaluate the evidence she does present. This includes evidence from both Kenyon's and Shiloh's reports of material which they attribute to Iron Age I.

Steiner dates Kenyon's discovery of a building with a complete collared-rim jar found on a plastered floor, to Iron Age I, and the terrace system (above this) also to Iron Age I, thus identifying two strata in this period. She uses the collared-rim jar fragments to date the remains below the terrace fills to Iron Age I, not taking into account studies showing that these jars had a long life. They began to appear in the Late Bronze Age and continued into the tenth century BCE.

Cahill says the collared-rim jars cannot be indicative of Iron Age 1 (Cahill 1998:38) and are not good chronological indicators. Because they were found together with pottery typical of the Late Bronze Age, the building remains in which they were found should rather be ascribed to this period and not Iron Age I as Steiner suggests.

7.5.2.3 The Tenth Century BCE

Steiner dates the Stepped-Stone Structure to the tenth century BCE, on the basis of pottery found in its fill, its connection to a casemate wall, proto-aeolic capital, ashlar and an ashlar wall. Shiloh's pottery from the mantle's fill of the Stepped-Stone Structure, is dated to the Late Bronze Age II or early Iron Age I, while pottery from the fills that covered the Stepped-Stone Structure can be ascribed to late Iron Age I or early Iron Age II, in the eleventh or tenth centuries BCE.

On the floors immediately above the Stepped-Stone Structure, Shiloh found hand-burnished pottery with dark red-slip. Cahill concludes that the evidence from Shiloh's reports suggests 'that the Stepped-Stone Structure was intentionally cut and partially dismantled sometime during the 10th century BCE to accommodate new construction' (Cahill 1998:39). The tenth century was not the century that this structure was built, but rather the century that it was superseded by new construction.

The Stepped-Stone Structure was not connected to the casemate wall as Steiner suggests, because the wall is located ten metres away. The proto-aeolic capital and ashlar blocks were not found in debris from the tenth century, but in debris relating to the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE. Cahill believes that none of the features Steiner quotes support a tenth century dating for the Stepped-Stone Structure (Cahill 1998:41).

Cahill sums up by saying that the role of archaeologists is 'to identify, record, preserve and publish the archaeological record as objectively, comprehensively and quickly as possible' (Cahill 1998:41). She finds Steiner's conclusions premature and unfounded, and her treatment of both the published and unpublished material, uncritical. She says that 'the community of archaeologists, historians and other parties interested in Jerusalem's development during these periods expects more and deserves better' (Cahill 1998:41).

7.5.3 The ancient texts as evidence of occupation

Na'aman (1997 & 1998) cautions against using the absence of data to reach negative conclusions, and quotes the Late Bronze Age II and the Amarna letters. Very little archaeological evidence has been found from this period, yet the Amarna letters show Jerusalem as a capital city ruled by a local king, with a palace, a court, and a temple. One of the scribes of the king obviously wrote the letters to the Egyptian pharaoh.

With regards to the absence of archaeological evidence in Late Bronze Age Jerusalem, Nadav Na'aman disagrees with Steiner that there is an occupation gap. He says that the city is there and that the ancient texts, prove it. Na'aman says it is tempting to draw negative conclusions from the absence of data, but this is unjustified, and fortunately 'in the case of Late Bronze Age Jerusalem, we have the corrective of the Amarna letters' (Na'aman 1998:44). He cautions against drawing conclusions, based on negative archaeological evidence, when there is no corrective, such as the United Monarchy in the tenth century BCE.

Na'aman finds it surprising that neither Kenyon nor Shiloh, two highly qualified excavators, mentioned this supposed gap in occupation, which spans several hundred years (Na'aman 1998:42). Na'aman says that both these archaeologists report on certain structures and pottery, which they attribute to a Late Bronze Age stratum, and neither appears to be aware of an occupation gap between the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age I. Steiner herself speaks of Late Bronze Age material from Kenyon's dig.

Na'aman claims that because Steiner is only working on the reports of Kenyon's work, she cannot know for certain how many sherds were found in a particular terrace. She does not know how many were kept, and how many were discarded. As

stated previously, the historicity of Jerusalem during this period was not previously questioned, therefore perhaps not all the fragments were kept. Na'aman says 'it is misleading to draw statistical conclusions on the basis of what they kept for publication after the daily sorting of pottery in the field' (Na'aman 1998:42). He says that her archaeological conclusions clash not only with Kenyon and Shiloh, but also with her own conclusions.

7.5.3.1 Amarna letters

The Amarna letters comprise about 350 clay tablets from the royal Egyptian archives at Tel el-Amarna, a mound of ruins halfway between Memphis and Luxor. This was the ancient capital of Amenophis IV. They are written in Akkadian and consist of the diplomatic correspondence from local Syro-Palestinian rulers who were subordinate to Egypt, to Pharaoh Amenophis III (1417-1379 BCE) and Pharaoh Amenophis IV (1370-1362 BCE). Some letters referred to groups who were causing disruption in Palestine by challenging Egyptian authority.

The Amarna letters date to the Late Bronze Age, and six of them were sent by the king of Jerusalem, 'Abdi-Heba, to the Egyptian pharaoh. Scholars inferred from these letters, that Jerusalem was the centre of a Canaanite city-state, ruled by a king who had close connections with Egypt.

Steiner recently attempted to dismiss these references to Jerusalem on the grounds that she did not consider 'Urusalim' – mentioned in the letters - to be the same city as Jerusalem (Na'aman 1998:42). Na'aman says that Steiner has now abandoned this reasoning, and now argues that the references do not suggest that Jerusalem was a city or even a town, and suggests a small estate.

Na'aman examines the relevant Amarna letters, which state:

- 'Abdi-Heba was called the king of Jerusalem (Urusalim), with the title *hazannu*, the same as other local rulers. 'Abdi-Heba was of the royal dynasty of Jerusalem, as is stated in his letters, and could not be considered a steward as Steiner suggests.

- 'Abdi-Heba lived in a house in Jerusalem, which is referred to in the letters and 50 Egyptian soldiers were garrisoned in another house in Jerusalem.
- 'Abdi-Heba sent rich caravans to the pharaoh
- One letter refers to a town belonging to Jerusalem.
- Several writing peculiarities are noted in the cuneiform of 'Abdi-Heba's letters. Prefixes which determine the character of the following word make it 'evident that the *town* of Jerusalem is frequently mentioned in 'Abdi-Heba's letters (Na'aman 1998:43), and not the lands of Jerusalem as Steiner suggests.
- In one letter, the king of Gath compares 'Abdi-Heba to the infamous king of Shechem, Lab'ayu, who had seized towns from Gath. Lab'ayu was even said to have tried to destroy Megiddo, and Na'aman feels this proves 'Abdi-Heba had more power than that of the steward which Steiner suggests.

Na'aman says the letters show that 'Abdi-Heba lived in a house in a town called Urusalim, and his status was the same as all the other rulers of city-states in Canaan. Although the city was not a metropolis, as the recent archaeological surveys show, it was a small hill-country kingdom.

7.5.3.2 *The biblical sources*

Na'aman then turns to the Bible, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which tell of the major fortification wall built under Nehemiah's supervision. No trace of this wall has been discovered, and Na'aman says 'this is another example of the difficulty in recovering strata that developed peacefully and did not end with catastrophe' (Na'aman 1997a:45). He claims that Jerusalem should not be judged on the absence of archaeological data.

As an historian, Na'aman asks whether the scribes who wrote the histories of David and Solomon had the original documents before them, or were these composed from oral traditions? Many scholars believe that the reference to scribes in the courts of David and Solomon, indicate that the tenth century court was literate. The revisionist

school on the other hand say that writing only entered the Jerusalem court in the eighth century, making the history of the United Monarchy no different to the pre-monarchical history (Na'aman 1997a:45).

Na'aman says that no extra-Biblical source mentions David or Solomon, and he believes that this is because accounts of international affairs only appeared in the ninth century BCE. All inscriptions of the tenth century only refer to local affairs, so even if David and Solomon had accomplished what the Bible says they did, their names would not have been mentioned.

The one exception to this is the topographical list of Pharaoh Shishak, who was the founder of the Egypt's XXII Dynasty. He left a long list of places that he conquered in a military campaign in Canaan in 925 BCE, and this campaign is described in 1 Kings 14:25-28. Na'aman believes that the author of the book of Kings, who probably lived three hundred years after Shishak, must have taken this information from a written text.

The Dan stele discussed in Chapter 6 however, refers to the House of David, suggesting that the kings traced their descent to David, while the Lemaire's translation of the inscription on the Mesha stele, discussed in the same chapter, tells how the Mesha, king of Moab defeated the House of David, or dynasty of David, in Moab. Although no extra-biblical source mentions David or Solomon, there is reference to the House of David, which suggests that there was a dynasty, which traced its roots back to a historical David.

7.5.3.3 The Jerusalem scribes

Scribes are thought to have been active in Jerusalem's courts in the late tenth century BCE, keeping the administrative records that are included in the histories of David and Solomon. In the book of II Samuel, there are lists of David's wives and sons, as well as of his officers. I Kings contains lists of Solomon's high officials, his twelve officers and their districts, as well as details of his building activities in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The biblical author or authors must have drawn on these records when compiling their histories.

Na'aman discusses the Old Hebrew Script, which contains certain hieratic numerals and signs not found in the documents of Israel's neighbours. These signs must have entered the Hebrew Script before the Division of the Monarchy, in the tenth century BCE, leaving Na'aman to conclude that 'writing was introduced into the Jerusalem court in the tenth century BCE, probably in the time of David and Solomon' (Na'aman 1997a:46). These scribes were probably secretaries to the king and officials in the administration of the kingdom.

The story of David's conquest of Jerusalem, his founding of a royal dynasty and the transfer of the Ark of Yahweh to the new capital are recorded in numerous biblical passages, which were written at different times and in different genres, such as the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah and Psalms. Na'aman believes that the variety of sources and genres suggests a historical basis for these records. David's renaming of the City of David has parallels in the Ancient Near East, where it was common to name cities after their founders.

Na'aman cites a ninth century stela from Tel Dan as another vital piece of information for the Davidic monarchy. The first fragment was discovered in 1993, with two other fragments found in 1994, and the mention of *Beth David* in the inscription indicates that the kingdom of Judah was called the House of David, which fits into the ancient Near Eastern usage. Na'aman also believes that Solomon built a temple, even if it was not as grand as the Bible describes, because the memory of Solomon as the founder must be authentic. He finds that the biblical evidence supports the claims that David conquered Jerusalem and founded a royal dynasty, and that Solomon built a temple and had a court with scribes amongst the officials.

With regards to the size and importance of the Davidic kingdom, Na'aman says 'we must always take into account the gap between modern definitions of states and how ancient societies defined themselves. A clear line must be drawn between these two sets of terms' (Na'aman 1997a:67). We need to distinguish what was understood at the time, and how we would define that situation today, in modern sociological and anthropological terms. The settlement pattern in the region also supports the existence of an administration capable of controlling the districts of a new kingdom.

7.6 Conclusion

Jerusalem is another area where archaeologists and scholars disagree about the dating of the United Monarchy. The major problem here appears to be the lack of evidence concerning certain periods but as Cahill says, absence of evidence is a negative feature of the archaeological record and not necessarily negative evidence that there was no settlement there.

Na'aman is also insistent that conclusions should not be based on lack of evidence. He claims that the archaeological evidence is there and that the ancient texts presuppose the existence of a United Monarchy, even if it was not as grand as the biblical descriptions.

Shanks concludes by saying: 'That the Jerusalem of the United Monarchy was not as grand or glorious as the Bible implies is almost surely true' (Shanks 2000b:37). He does, however, find that it is very improbable that the city was abandoned for a millennium, even without taking the biblical evidence into account.

The recent excavations of Reich and Shukron have shown that there is plenty of evidence, it has just not been excavated yet (Reich & Shukron 1999:22-72). The evidence is either lying beneath current buildings or constructions or under centuries of debris and rubble waiting to be uncovered.

CHAPTER 8

TENTH CENTURY EVIDENCE AT MEGIDDO

8.1 Introduction

Megiddo was situated in a strategic position on the intersection of major trade and military routes and on the pass to the Jezreel valley. The *Via Maris* which was the main trade route to the east, passed directly through the town. Megiddo therefore played a major part in the history of the Israelites and Canaanites and became a major battlefield in ancient times. The site is surrounded by mighty fortifications, equipped with impressive palaces and temples and features some of the most elaborate Iron Age architectural remains in Israel (Shanks 1998d:46).

Excavations have shown that the site was occupied virtually without a break from the fourth millennium up to the fourth century BCE, and the remains of more than twenty cities in occupational layers have been uncovered, with the first human remains dating to 6000 BCE. An unparalleled number of artifacts, including ivories and inscriptions have been found.

According to the biblical account in 1 Kings 4:12, Megiddo became the centre of a royal province during the reign of King Solomon and Shishak is said to have conquered the city in the days of Rehoboam (928-911 BCE) in 925 BCE. Traditionally, Solomon is believed to have developed the tenth century BCE Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo into a fortress city, and Finkelstein says that 'the archaeology of the United Monarchy was born at Megiddo and remained focused on that site for half a century' (Finkelstein 1996:178). Megiddo is a site that has been a source of constant dispute with regards to the building phases in the period of the Monarchy.

8.2 Excavation history

There have been four major excavations at Tel Megiddo. Gottlieb Schumacher, from the *Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* was the first to excavate, between 1903 and 1905 using the trenching method of excavation. He exposed eight strata, covering a period

from the nineteenth century BCE to the Persian Age. Yadin calls this 'a destructive dig' carried out by an 'amateur archaeologist' (Yadin 1975:207).

Between 1925 and 1939, under the direction of Clarence S Fisher (1925-1927), P L O Guy (1927-1929) and Gordon Loud (1935-1939), the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago undertook excavations at Megiddo and re-studied the work of Schumacher. This became known as the 'Chicago expedition'.

They exposed twenty layers, some with multiple phases, covering a period from the Chalcolithic age to the Persian age. They discovered a fragment of a large stone stele, which they attributed to Pharaoh Shishak, in the rubble left by Schumacher (Ussishkin 1990:71). They also exposed a massive six-chamber gate-complex, an offset-inset wall and two complexes that they thought to be stables. This was Stratum IV from the top, which they dated to c.1000 and 800 BCE, and attributed to Solomon. Yadin writes that: 'Despite the methodological excavations of the Oriental Institute quite a number of stratigraphic problems remained' (Yadin 1975:207).

On the southern side of the tel, a large palace or fort built of dressed ashlar stones was discovered beneath the offset-inset wall. The excavators realised that their 'Solomonic' wall was built on top of the palace. Yadin regards the stones as identical to those found in the Solomonic gate (Yadin 1975:208). A similar structure was discovered beneath the southern stables, and as these buildings could not belong to Stratum IV, and as Stratum V had already been designated, the palace and structure were ascribed to Stratum IVB, as they assumed these buildings were built before the offset-inset wall, which they had already ascribed to Solomon and the tenth century BCE. They proposed that either Solomon had built the palace at the beginning of his reign, and demolished it to build the wall, or David built it. Yadin considered the different interpretations proposed unsatisfactory.

In the 1950's, W F Albright and G E Wright, prominent American archaeologists, attempted to clarify the stratigraphy and concluded that the palace and structure should be ascribed to Stratum IVB as well as other structures and they introduced another stratum, Stratum VA-IVB. However, they still accepted the excavator's assumption that Stratum IV proper be attributed to the tenth century BCE and

Solomon, together with the solid offset-inset wall and stables, and they ascribed the earlier palace to David.

In 1960, Yigael Yadin decided to re-excavate at Megiddo, and headed the third expedition to Megiddo on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:97). He conducted excavations at the site between 1960-1961, 1966-1967 and in 1971. Unfortunately it was impossible to carry out new excavations in the gate area as the area had been extensively excavated and Yadin decided that instead of re-interpreting the results of the original excavators, he 'performed what he called a "post mortem" on the mound of Megiddo' (Stern 1990:13).

The discovery of the six-chambered gate at Hazor from the tenth century Stratum X and the similar gate unearthed by Macalister at Gezer led Yadin to state that this was conclusive evidence 'that the three gates had been built by Solomon, in full agreement with the statement in 1 Kings 9:15' (Stern 1990:12). This verse was also the reason for Yadin to classify the tri-partite buildings uncovered by the University of Chicago as stables for Solomon's horses. The tenth century BCE Solomonic stratum was now represented as a grand city, with a six-chambered gate, city walls, stables and palaces.

Co-directors David Ussishkin and Israel Finkelstein of the Tel Aviv University, together with Baruch Halpern from Pennsylvania State University undertook renewed excavations in 1994. Their aim is to clarify the 'confusing and disputed stratification problems of Megiddo brought about by wrong excavation techniques' (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:97). They question Yadin's dating of the six-chambered gate and casemate wall to the time of Solomon, and propose Ahab as the builder.

Finkelstein (1997) believes that Megiddo was where the archaeology of the United Monarchy was born and another of their aims is to excavate the Solomonic ashlar palace and establish the date of the beginning of the Israelite monarchy. David Ussishkin, who excavated at Jezreel between 1990-1996 with John Woodhead, also believes Jezreel has much to offer in the question of the missing tenth century (Shanks 1998a).

8.3 The archaeological evidence

Yadin excavations at Megiddo between 1960 and 1971, began with the area to the east of Schumacher's trench where he uncovered sections of an offset-inset wall in Stratum IVA, and which he initially attributed to Solomon together with the six-chambered gate.

8.3.1 Gates and walls

The solid wall and stables therefore belonged to Stratum IV, while the tenth century BCE stratum now consisted of the six-chambered gate, palaces, and casemate wall and was designated by Yadin as Stratum VA-IVB and attributed to Solomon. Both Ussishkin and Mazar doubt the existence of a casemate wall.

A study of the gates and walls at Gezer and Hazor revealed that the walls attached to the gates in these two sites were casemate walls. Yadin pre-supposed that Megiddo in Solomon's time should have a casemate wall similar to those discovered at Hazor, and in his excavations at Megiddo in 1960, he discovered that what was thought to be the foundation of the offset-inset wall, was actually another city wall, built in a straight line, but which did not follow the line of the offset-inset wall. This new wall was constructed of ashlar masonry, about 1.5 metres thick and laid in header-stretcher fashion, with stones similar to those found in the gate. The offset-inset wall therefore post-dated this casemate wall.

The casemate wall continued under the 'stables', and as Yadin attributed the six-chambered gate, together with the casemate wall to Solomon, this ended the notion that Solomon was the architect of these 'stables'. He also discovered that the offset-inset wall was built on the foundations of another structure, probably a palace, which he labelled as Palace 6000. On either side of this palace, Yadin discovered what he considered to be further sections of the casemate wall. Yigal Shiloh who carried out a fresh examination of the plans and records of the earlier excavators confirmed this (Shiloh 1980:69).

8.3.2 Palaces

Two palaces are attributed to Stratum VA-IVB and the Solomonic era. A square building in the southern section of the tel, Palace 1723 excavated by the Chicago expedition and a rectangular palace in the north-eastern section of the tel, Palace 6000, excavated by Yadin in 1960, and described above. David Ussishkin believes Palace 1723 in the south, resembles the *bit-hilani* palaces of Northern Syria, which were influenced by the Phoenicians. He likens it to Solomon's palace in Jerusalem, which is described in 1 Kings 7:1-12 (Ussishkin 1966:179,181). Scheffler questions whether he was led by the biblical text and his own presuppositions 'to find an example of a "Solomonic" palace that would fit 1 Kings 7:1-12 (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:114).

8.3.3 Stables or storehouses

In the north-eastern and south-western sections, two large pillared complexes were originally interpreted as stables by P L O Guy on the basis of the biblical reference in 1 Kings, and dated to Stratum IVB. Yadin accepted this interpretation.

*He built up Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert,
within his land, as well as all his store cities and the towns for his
chariots and for his horses – whatever he desired to build in
Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.*

(1 Kings 9:17-19, NIV)

Today most scholars agree that these complexes were not stables and were not built by Solomon in the tenth century BCE. They may possibly have been storehouses, like similar buildings that were discovered at Beersheba, dating to the ninth or eighth centuries BCE, where hundreds of household vessels were found in the side halls of three buildings (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:120).

Mazar, accepts that the complexes are a subject of debate, but maintains that their identification as stables by the excavators was correct (Mazar 1997:161). He disagrees with Finkelstein's dating to after the time of Ahab, because 'their attribution to the time of Ahab fits too well the exceptional number of 2000 chariots brought by

this king to the battle of Karkar, according to the records of Shalmanesser III (Mazar 1997:161).

8.4 Conflicting interpretations of the data

The results of Yadin's work remained undisputed for decades. Recently, Finkelstein and Ussishkin, the directors of the fourth expedition to Megiddo, proposed that the gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer be dated to the ninth century BCE, Stratum IVA and attributed to Ahab. These finds appear to be corroborated by the discovery of a six-chambered gate at Jezreel by the co-directors of the recent excavations, David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, making the six-chambered gate not uniquely Solomonic (Scheepers & Scheffler 2000:107).

Lately, Ussishkin and Finkelstein question the date of the whole of Stratum VA-IVB, and assign it to a century later. If this means that the six-chambered gate is not Solomonic, what about the gates at Gezer and Hazor? Both Dever, who excavated Gezer, and Ben Tor, who is re-excavating Hazor, maintain that their gates date to the tenth century BCE (Shanks 1997a:38). The minimalists declare that there is no archaeological evidence of an Israelite state in the tenth century, but if these dates are correct, this would mean that an administration capable of financing and organising such fortifications was in place during this period.

Ephraim Stern, who did his masters thesis on the fortifications and gates of Palestine, is convinced that the 'stratigraphy and chronology of the Solomonic gate at Hazor is generally accepted, and the examination of the six-chambered gate at Gezer by the Hebrew Union College under the direction of W Dever seems to confirm the chronological basis of Yadin's hypothesis' (Stern 1990:12).

Yadin dates the casemate wall and six-chambered gate to Solomon, while Ussishkin believes the six-chambered gate and offset-inset wall belongs in Stratum IVA and should be attributed to Ahab. Ussishkin did not find casemate walls and Mazar also doubts the existence of these walls. He believes that 'the fact that such a wall was not observed by the first excavators raises strong doubts regarding its existence; the rooms found by Yadin east of Palace 6000 can hardly be taken as evidence of such a

casemate wall' (Mazar 1990:400). Finkelstein says that 'though there were fortifications in the tenth century even according to the Low Chronology,...the main mounds both in the north (Megiddo and Gezer) and in the south (Beer-sheba and Lachish) were fortified only in ninth century BCE or even later' (Finkelstein 1996:185).

The excavators in 1930 found one floor associated with the gates, but Yadin found two. The lower floor ran up to the gate's first course and the second floor was level with the fifth course. The argument between Ussishkin and Yadin hinges on the type of foundations used. They both give different interpretations, which they base on the types of foundations used in antiquity. Ussishkin claims there were two types of foundations, while Yadin says there were three.

8.4.1 Foundations used in ancient times

Ussishkin says that in ancient times two types of foundations were used (Ussishkin 1980:10). The first was the digging of a trench, so that the foundation could be laid below the ground level, as a sunken foundation. The second was built above ground level. Four courses were laid for the foundation walls, and the space thus created was filled with rubble allowing construction on top of this built up foundation. He claims that the lower floor discovered is not connected with the six-chambered gateway, but belongs to the Solomonic gateway that was completely destroyed with the destruction of Stratum VA-IVB. The offset-inset wall adjoins the six-chambered gate and should be attributed to Stratum IVA and Ahab.

Yadin points out that there were not only two types of foundation used in ancient times, but three. As well as the trench and built up methods, there was the possibility of 'no foundation' (Yadin 1980:19). This type of construction would be used if the surrounding ground could provide sufficient support for the structure.

Initial photographs showed that the lower floor of the gate, which Yadin attributes to Solomon, sloped up to the wall, and proved that the wall was built before the floor. He also claims that the discovery of the casemate walls is final evidence against Ussishkin's theory. Yadin claims that Solomon constructed the six-chambered gate and casemate walls found in Stratum VA-IVB, and that the gateway escaped

relatively unscathed in the destruction. Debris covered it up to the fifth course, and in Stratum IVA, Ahab simply built offset-inset walls on the top.

8.4.2 Invasion of Pharaoh Shishak

A key destruction layer at Megiddo is the invasion of Pharaoh Shishak in 925 BCE. Megiddo was one of the names of the conquered cities on Shishak's list, which is carved onto the walls of the temple of Amon at Karnak in Egypt. Albright (1943), Kenyon (1964), Yadin (1960), Aharoni (1967) and Ussishkin (1980), all agreed that Shishak destroyed Solomonic Megiddo c. 925 BCE a few years after Solomon's death in 930 BCE, although they disagreed as to which level this was.

If the destruction of Stratum VA-IVB can be attributed to this pharaoh, then this was clearly a tenth century BCE city. But Finkelstein and Ussishkin now question this and put Shishak's destruction of Megiddo at the less impressive Stratum VIA, which 'strips the United Monarchy of monumental buildings' (Shanks 1998a:59).

This proposed new dating has been fiercely disputed by other scholars, and particularly by Lawrence Stager of Harvard University, who contends that Shishak's invasion is evident at other sites (Shanks 1998a:59). He cites Taanach, a city on Shishak's list, where there is no stratum comparable to Megiddo's level VIA, which dates to the eleventh century BCE, but a destruction layer contemporaneous with Stratum VA-IVB (pottery and cultic assemblages). There is only one destruction layer at Taanach that could be attributed to Shishak. If Ussishkin and Finkelstein are correct in suggesting that Shishak's destruction at Megiddo was Stratum VIA, and dating this stratum to the tenth century, then Shishak's list must have been incorrect. Stager believes that Shishak destroyed Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, which was the tenth century BCE stratum.

Wightman states that there is 'no clear evidence for a Shishak destruction level at Megiddo' (Wightman 1985:125). The archaeological evidence points to the fact that although certain buildings were destroyed, there was no overall destruction by fire of Stratum VA-IVB.

Ussishkin claims that Stratum IVA differs radically from the previous stratum, which is characterised by monumental buildings, and shows 'a city protected by massive city walls and a massive city gate, large stable compounds and a water system' (Ussishkin 1990:73). Ussishkin believes Megiddo became a fortified city as a result of the division of the United Monarchy after Solomon's death. He also believes that the destruction date of Stratum VA-IVB cannot be accurately fixed, nor can the pottery found beneath the destruction debris be accurately dated.

8.4.3 Jezreel pottery

Ussishkin and Finkelstein rely on Ussishkin's excavations at Jezreel, where a pottery assemblage found near a monumental fortified enclosure was 'somewhat similar' to that at Megiddo's Stratum VA-IVB (Finkelstein 1996:183), and which Ussishkin dated to the ninth century BCE. Ussishkin dates the pottery at Jezreel on the basis of the biblical passage in 2 Kings 9-10 and he accepts the historicity of Jehu's revolt.

The archaeological evidence at the fortified enclosure that Ussishkin uncovered showed that the settlement was short-lived and destroyed by fire. He claims that if this enclosure can be attributed to Omri in the ninth century, then Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo also belongs to the ninth century because of the similar pottery.

Amihai Mazar from the Hebrew University points out that pottery should not change that much between 'the second half of the tenth century and that of the mid-ninth century in a limited geopolitical area like the Valley of Jezreel' (Mazar 1997:161).

8.4.4 Shishak's Stele

Ussishkin uses Shishak's stele as part of his argument that Shishak did not destroy Stratum VA-IVB. This stele was not found in a stratified context, but in rubble left behind by previous excavations. Ussishkin says Shishak would not erect a monument like this in a destroyed city, only in a captured one. He argues that if such a monumental stele was erected at Megiddo, then the city must have continued to exist following Shishak's conquest (Ussishkin 1990:73).

8.5 Conclusion

Ussishkin and Finkelstein have failed to convince most of their colleagues. Americans, Lawrence Stager, William Dever and Seymour Gitin and their Israeli colleagues Amnon Ben Tor and Amihai Mazar have rejected the new proposed chronology (Shanks 1998a:60).

Finkelstein states that while 'he cannot prove his theory...neither would any scholar be able to prove the prevailing view' (Finkelstein 1996:178).

Yadin, on the other hand wrote more than two decades ago: 'We can say today that the city of Stratum VA-IVB was undoubtedly the one built by Solomon. This conclusion is derived not only from the biblical statement that Solomon rebuilt Megiddo, but also from all the pottery, architectural and stratigraphic evidence.' He believes that even if his excavations resulted in 'Solomon's stables' being reclassified, 'we may return to its glory his true city – which is no less magnificent than the cities of the northern kings of Israel who ruled after him' (Yadin 1975:230).

The objections raised by Ussishkin and Finkelstein with regards to the dating of the fortifications, gates, walls and palaces dated by Yadin to the tenth century BCE certainly need to be taken into account before conclusions concerning the size and character of the tenth century city can be made. All this however, does not deny the historicity of the United Monarchy. Stratum VA-IVB, is still considered to be the stratum relating to the United Monarchy and Solomon, and it is therefore only the character of this city, which is disputed by Finkelstein's proposed new chronology. Was 'Solomon's empire' as grand and glorious as the biblical accounts imply? The biblical records are more than likely exaggerated, and the United Monarchy may have been less grand than Yadin believed, but most scholars still believe that Stratum VA-IVB indicates that there was a fairly substantial city in Megiddo in the tenth century BCE.

CHAPTER 9

TENTH CENTURY EVIDENCE AT HAZOR AND GEZER

9.1 Introduction

Both these cities, Hazor in the north and Gezer in the Shephelah are key sites providing a wealth of information on the material culture in the tenth century BCE.

9.1.1 Hazor

Hazor was the most important city in northern Galilee in the tenth century BCE, and controlled the trade and military routes connecting Israel to Phoenicia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The tel is one of the largest, and measures over 70 hectares, rising high above the surrounding valley. The book of Joshua tells of the fiery destruction of Hazor during the Israelite conquest of Canaan. King Jabin of Hazor is said to have gathered together all the kings of the area against Joshua who conquered the city and razed it to the ground.

At that time Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms,) Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed them, not sparing anything that breathed, and he burned up Hazor itself.

(Joshua 11:10-11, NIV)

A new city was built up on the ashes, and it was this city that Solomon is said to have fortified when he conscripted labour to build the walls of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer (Ben-Tor 1999:28).

Here is the account of the forced labour King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

(1 Kings 9:15, NIV)

9.1.2 Gezer

Gezer, one of the main cities in the northern Shephelah, was strategically situated between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean coast, the valley of Sorek and the valley of Aijalon. Several inscriptions found incised on rock close to the tel, bear witness to the fact, that this tel was indeed the biblical city of Gezer (Yadin 1975:200).

Gezer's military importance has led to its occupation in many periods of history. The biblical reference says that Solomon reduced the people to forced labour and rebuilt the city, which the Egyptian Pharaoh had destroyed and given to Solomon as a dowry with his daughter.

Pharaoh King of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.

(1 Kings 9:16, NIV)

The early excavation history at this site has resulted in confusing stratigraphic and chronological conclusions. Yadin's discovery of the six-chambered gate at Hazor, which was almost identical to the gate uncovered at Megiddo, caused Yadin to return to R Macalister's report of his excavations at Gezer. With the verse 1 Kings 9:15 in mind, he discovered a side of a six-chambered gate which Macalister had labelled as a 'Maccabean Castle'. This indicated that Macalister had considered the building to be dated to the second century BCE and Maccabean times.

9.2 Excavation History

9.2.1 Hazor

The most important archaeological excavations that have taken place at Hazor are those of Yigael Yadin and Amnon Ben Tor.

9.2.1.1 Yigael Yadin

As early as 1928, soundings were taken at the site of Hazor by the British archaeologist John Garstang, but it was in the 1950's that Yigael Yadin led the largest and most important archaeological excavation ever yet undertaken by the new state of Israel.

In 1955, Yadin declared: 'I am going to excavate Hazor. I must know about Joshua. I must know if he really conquered it' (Ben-Tor 1999:30). He opened four excavation sites and in 1968 he returned and opened four more. After excavating the site, he declared that Joshua had destroyed the Canaanite city and Solomon had later rebuilt it.

Many of today's leading Israeli archaeologists received their training under Yadin at Hazor. Yadin was drawn to Hazor because of his interest in the Bible and his desire to 'confront the Biblical narrative, especially the accounts of the Israelite "conquest" of the Promised Land and settlement of Canaan' (Ben-Tor 1999:28). Excavations at Jericho, Ai, Bethel, Shiloh and Hazor were all undertaken to 'prove' the biblical narrative, as was Yadin's re-excavation in the 1960's and 1970's at Megiddo.

Over twenty strata have been excavated at Hazor, representing the remains of many cities built one on top of the other over a period of 3000 years. Yadin believed that Joshua destroyed Hazor as the biblical accounts suggest, but the date of the destruction and the identity of the destroyers became a much-debated issue. The disagreement between Yohanan Aharoni, one of Yadin's supervisors and Yadin himself, prevented the publication of the final excavation report until after both their deaths. Yadin died in 1984 while planning to return to Hazor.

9.2.1.2 Amnon Ben Tor

In 1990, Amnon Ben-Tor began renewed excavations in memory of Yigael Yadin. This is a joint project of the Hebrew University and the Universidad Complutense in Madrid and has been sponsored by the Israel Exploration Society and the Spanish government (Ben-Tor 1999:60).

Ben-Tor's aims were to check the stratigraphy on which Yadin based his chronological and historical conclusions as well as to explore unresolved issues. The

current excavators at Megiddo are opposed to Yadin's dating, and one of Ben Tor's main aims at Hazor was to clarify the dating of the Stratum X, which Yadin attributed to the tenth century and King Solomon (Ben-Tor 1999:33).

9.2.2 Gezer

The site was identified as ancient Gezer as early as 1870 by the French archaeologist and biblical scholar Charles Clermont-Ganneau on the similarity of Arab sounding names to the biblical Gezer.

9.2.2.1 RAS Macalister

An Irishman, RAS Macalister excavated at Gezer from 1902–1909, when scientific excavation techniques were in their infancy. He worked on a large scale, single-handed, employing only local labourers, and is said to have excavated nearly sixty percent of the mound to bedrock (Moorey 1981:25).

Yadin writes that: 'Not only was archaeology in its infancy at the time, but worse, Macalister's own zeal and ambition caused much of the ensuing stratigraphic and chronological confusion about the many things he discovered on the site' (Yadin 1975:201). Yet, serious attempts were made to record systematically and to publish promptly, and the publication of large amounts of pottery from Gezer formed the typological-chronological framework for future studies.

9.2.2.2 Yigael Yadin

The discoveries at Hazor, together with the passage in 1 Kings 9:15 led Yigael Yadin to re-examine Macalister's report in the hope of finding a gate. In the section entitled 'Plan of the Maccabean Castle of Gezer', Yadin detected a casemate wall, an outer gatehouse and half of a city gate similar to those discovered at Hazor and Megiddo (Yadin 1975:202).

Macalister had ascribed these to the Maccabean era because of the Hellenistic pottery and a Greek inscription discovered there. Yadin believed the wall and gate both belonged to the Solomonic period, and in 1958, he published an article in the *Israel Exploration Journal* entitled 'Solomon's city wall and gate at Gezer', suggesting that the 'Maccabean Castle' was actually a Solomonic gate. Yadin was confident of his

deductions, but realised the need for renewed excavations in order to uncover the other half of the gate.

9.2.2.3 William Dever, George E Wright and J D Seger

W Dever and G E Wright followed by J D Seger conducted large-scale excavations at Gezer between 1964 and 1974. The Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology in Jerusalem sponsored these excavations on behalf of the Jerusalem branch of the Hebrew Union College and the main objective was to re-excavate and re-interpret the fortifications, which Macalister had excavated. The Wheeler-Kenyon method was employed, which 'emphasised the vertical dimension by analysing the various earth layers and their contents' (Mazar 1990:24). The Gezer excavations served as a field school for a group of American archaeologists, some of who later directed their own excavations.

At first Yadin's views were treated with caution, and the gate was not referred to as Solomon's gate, but as 'Yadin's' gate. When Dever's team uncovered the other half of the gate, revealing the entire gate, which bore a strong resemblance in measurements to the other two gates, Yadin immediately concluded that these three gates should be classified as Solomonic on the basis of the biblical verse. Dever wrote: 'Yigael Yadin rescued Macalister's long-buried "Maccabean Castle" from obscurity by correctly comparing the plan with the Megiddo and Hazor Solomonic gates' (Dever 1982:20).

Dever returned to Gezer in the 80's to re-investigate the problems and to re-excavate the outer gate and wall, but Mazar believes that Dever's dating from these excavations should be taken with caution, as the tenth century date for the rebuilding of this wall is based on potsherds from fills found outside the gate (Mazar 1990:400).

9.3 The Archaeological Evidence

9.3.1 Hazor

While excavating a building in Stratum X, Yadin discovered a well-built casemate wall, giving him important corroboration that the stratum was Solomonic. He had not conclusively dated the building to Solomon's time, but said that 'the relative date

based on the stratigraphy, and the absolute date based on the pottery were sound' (Yadin 1975:189).

Further north along the line of the wall, Yadin discovered the famous six-chambered gate, which was connected to the casemate wall and enclosed the western part of the tel. The six chambers and two towers as well as the dimensions, were 'identical to those of the gate discovered earlier at Megiddo and ascribed by its excavators to the city of Solomon' (Yadin 1975:193). Yadin himself concurred with the dating of the Megiddo gate.

This gate together with almost identical gates discovered at Megiddo and Gezer were attributed by Yadin to king Solomon on the basis of 1 Kings 9:15. As stated previously, the archaeology of the United Monarchy has been based on this dating and the concept widely accepted until recently when it has come under attack. Finkelstein and others have suggested lowering this dating to the ninth century, but Ben-Tor concurs with Yadin's dating of the gate.

If Finkelstein were correct in lowering the tenth century assemblages to the ninth century, this would result in very dense stratigraphy at Hazor. There would be seven strata in 150-year period. Mazar believes this is an incredibly brief duration for each stratum, but Finkelstein says that because Hazor was a border site, one should expect many occupations and destructions (Shanks 1998a:60).

Ben Tor re-opened two areas, Area A and Area M. Area A contains the famous six chambered gate in the centre of the tell. The earliest city wall enclosed the western half of the tell only and the gate was then on the periphery of the city, although not on the periphery of the mound. The city only spread to the eastern half of the tell in the ninth century. Area M included the meeting point of the ninth and tenth century fortification systems. Because fortifications remain in use for long periods, they are difficult to date, and there is often very little datable pottery around.

In Area A, Ben Tor like Yadin found only one occupation layer dating to Iron Age I (1200–1000 BCE) but as a 200-year period is considered too long for one stratum, this caused problems. Iron Age II (1000–732 BCE) showed Hazor flourishing again,

but we now come to the contentious period of the tenth century BCE, the period of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon, which is assumed to be a period of great glory. Ben-Tor needed to excavate more of this stratum, and he concentrated on 'what appeared to be a large tenth-century BCE building, of which Yadin had uncovered only a small part' (Ben-Tor 1999:33). He was unable to excavate more fully because two other buildings had been built over it. One was a tri-partite pillared building, and the other a four-roomed house, which he dated to the ninth to eighth centuries BCE.

To overcome this problem, the buildings were not simply dismantled, but very carefully moved from their original location and restored to the northwest, making them 'meaningful and attractive not only to archaeologists but to the general public as well' (Ben-Tor 1999:33). This now enabled Ben-Tor to excavate below these buildings.

The large building - lying above the remains of the Canaanite palace - that Yadin had only partially uncovered was exposed and a large pottery assemblage plus four architectural phases was found. The building was located just inside the casemate wall and was separated by a paved street. The pavement is related to the building, which is related to the casemate wall, which in turn is bonded to the six-chambered gate. The rich pottery assemblage, that was found on the floor of the building, and which was unavailable to Yadin, enabled Ben-Tor to date the gate, casemate wall and earliest architectural phase of the building to the second half of the tenth century BCE. He bases these conclusions on a detailed comparative study of both pottery and stratigraphy (Ben-Tor 1999:33).

9.3.2 Gezer

As is the case with Hazor and Megiddo, the stratigraphy of the tenth century has been a much-debated issue over the years. Exactly which level may be attributed to the period of the United Monarchy, or perhaps the Divided Monarchy remains unclear.

9.3.2.1 Fortifications

Yadin says that when Dever found the other half of the gate and checked the stratigraphy and pottery, he became so excited that he declared: 'Solomon did indeed re-build Gezer!' (Yadin 1975:203).

In 1958, Yadin wrote in his article 'Solomon's city wall and gate at Gezer', that there were striking similarities of the gate at Gezer to those discovered at Hazor and Megiddo both in the plan of the fortifications and in their dimensions, 'as if all "were in fact built by Solomon's architects from identical blue-prints, with minor changes in each case, made necessary by the terrain"' (Yadin 1975:202).

David Milson (1986) in his article *The design of the Royal Gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer*, explores Yadin's conclusions that the gates were built from identical blue-prints, and proves otherwise as he compares Yadin's measurements with his own. See chart below: (Milson 1986:88).

Y YADIN

Details	Megiddo	Hazor	Gezer
Length of Gate	20.3m	20.3m	19.0m
Width of Gate	17.5m	18.0m	16.2m
Space between Towers	6.5m	6.1m	5.5m
Width of Entrance passage	4.2m	4.2m	3.1m
Width of Walls	1.6m	1.6m	1.6m
Total width of Casement Wall	-	5.4m	5.4m

D MILSON

Details	Megiddo	Hazor	Gezer
Length of Gate	20.10m	20.70-20.80m	16.40m
Width of Gate	17.80m	18.30m	16.72m
Space between Towers	6.40m	6.00-6.30m	4.20m
Width of Entrance passage	4.20m	4.20m	4.20m
Width of Walls	1.60m	1.60m	1.60m
Total width of Casement Wall	-	5.00m	5.00m

Milson reconstructed the design of the gates from his measurements and concluded that although the gates were similar in form and dimensions, with a row of three rooms on either side of the gate passage; some walls three cubits wide; two towers at the entrance, but of different size and form, they were not built from identical blueprints, but were in fact, 'three different design entities.' Milson did not work on the chronology.

The six-chambered gate at Gezer was constructed of large fieldstones, with ashlar only being used for parts of the façade. A casemate wall was found on either side of the gate, but probably did not surround the city (Mazar 1990:387). An outer gate constructed of ashlar masonry was related to the solid 'Outer Wall', which Dever considered to have been built in the Late Bronze Age and rebuilt by Solomon. Mazar however believes the wall was added during the time of the Divided Monarchy (Mazar 1990:387).

Ussishkin says that Dever's chronology of Gezer in the tenth century BCE depends on the assumption that the destruction of Gezer Stratum VIII was the work of Shishak in 925 BCE. Dever's excavations 'revealed the burned layer of Gezer destroyed by Solomon's "father-in-law" and thus clarifies the historical development in Gezer (Yadin 1975:205). There is however, disagreement about whether the name Gezer is mentioned on Shishak's list or not. According to a reading in 1973 by K Kitchen, the name does not appear and Ussishkin claims that 'because Gezer is not mentioned in the existing list we lack a positive indication that connects Shishak's campaign to a destruction level in Tel Gezer' (Ussishkin 1990:76).

Dever's excavations in the late 80's have enhanced the understanding of the Iron Age fortifications at Gezer, and as previously stated, were prompted by the controversy over the date of the outer city wall. Dever followed Macalister and argued that the wall included three phases of construction. He concluded that the wall was constructed in the Late Bronze Age and continued in use in the Iron Age with towers being added to it in the Solomonic period and the 'so called Solomonic Gate' being incorporated in a breach in the wall (Ussishkin 1990:74).

Mazar believes that Dever's dating from these excavations should be taken with caution, as the tenth century date for the rebuilding of this wall is based on potsherds from fills found outside the gate (Mazar 1990:400). Others, including Finkelstein (1981) argued that the wall was constructed in the Iron Age, while Kenyon (1977:57) dates its construction to the Hellenistic period.

Ussishkin believes that the wall and gate-complex are contemporary and he dates them to the time of Solomon or later, and tends to concur with Finkelstein. He also believes Dever's excavations are not conclusive and that the excavated area is too narrow. He cannot accept that the gate was fitted into a breach in the old fortifications, but rather that the gate was built first and the line of the wall adapted to this gate.

Ussishkin makes two further points with regards to the fortifications. Firstly, he believes that the gate complex, the adjoining palace, the casemate wall and the outer city wall all form part of an integrated system of fortifications (Ussishkin 1990:77). Dever's sectional trench provided clues to the functions of both walls by uncovering what may represent a glacis that extended from the outer city wall to the bottom of the casemate wall. Similar fortifications have been found at Tel Lachish (Ussishkin 1983:119) and Tel Batash.

Secondly the abundant use of ashlar masonry in Gezer resembles its use in Israelite Megiddo, Dan and Samaria. This may indicate a cultural orientation and affinity to the north. Level IV at Lachish contains virtually no ashlar masonry, therefore if the fortifications at Gezer date to the Divided Monarchy, then Gezer would have formed part of the kingdom of Israel and not Judah.

9.3.2.2 Pottery

Dever found that red-slipped, irregularly burnished pottery was absent from the fills under the inner gatehouse, but appeared in the fills of the outer gatehouse and adjoining walls. He dates this pottery to the mid-tenth century, but Ussishkin says that there is no way to date it precisely to either the tenth or ninth centuries, and the pottery could possibly date to the time of Solomon, but could also date to the beginning of the ninth century BCE (Ussishkin 1990:76).

Yadin also believed the red-burnished pottery was characteristic of the tenth century, and led him to state that 'the stratigraphy and pottery demonstrated conclusively that the complex had been built in Solomon's times' (Yadin 1975:203).

9.4 Conclusion

Decades ago, Yadin stated that one of the main aims of his expedition at Hazor was to discover Solomon's city, and he concludes that: 'It so happened that we not only found the city and fortifications built by Solomon, but with the help of our discoveries at Hazor, we also managed to discover the Solomonic gates and fortifications at Gezer and Solomon's fortifications at Megiddo' (Yadin 1975:187).

Yadin believed that his excavations at Hazor were 'a classic case in which stratigraphy, pottery, historical documents and, above all, the biblical narrative enabled us to date the various cities in absolute chronology' (Yadin 1975:199).

When Yadin wrote about his discoveries at Hazor and Megiddo, the results of which led him to re-examine Macalister's plans and uncover the third six-chamber gate, he says, 'the truth is that our great guide was the Bible; and as an archaeologist I cannot imagine a greater thrill than working with the Bible in one hand and the spade in the other' (Yadin 1975:187). Today that attitude to archaeology is considered dangerous.

Although Ben-Tor today dates the six-chambered gate and casemate wall at Hazor to the second half of the tenth century, he says that the archaeological evidence does not confirm whether they belong to Solomon or not as they cannot be dated so precisely. Ben-Tor goes on to say that: 'King Solomon is generally assumed to have ruled in the mid-tenth century. If so, there is no reason why the gate and the casemate wall could not be attributed to king Solomon; but as likely as this seems, this is not an archaeological conclusion' (Ben-Tor 1999:36).

With regards to Gezer, Kitchen's new reading of Shishak's list shows that the name of Gezer is not mentioned, but Ussishkin argues that it does not mean that the pharaoh did not conquer Gezer - the name may have been on the part of the list that is missing today. This however, means that we lack positive identification that connects

Shishak's campaign to a destruction level at Gezer and Ussishkin says: 'Thus we cannot accurately date the fortifications of Gezer on the basis of the available chronological evidence. They probably date either to the period of Solomon or to the earlier part of the Divided Monarchy' (Ussishkin 1990:76). Ussishkin believes that the only datum supporting a Solomonic dating is the biblical reference in 1 Kings 9:15, which he says could have referred to monumental buildings and not specifically fortifications.

Dever contradicts this view and bases his dating at Gezer on the tenth century BCE hand-burnished pottery as well as the wheel-burnished ninth century BCE pottery, which was found in the destruction levels later than the gate. He also believes that although Shishak did not explicitly mention Gezer in his lists, other northern cities were mentioned, making it highly probable that Shishak also passed through Gezer.

Both Ben Tor and Dever date their respective gates to the tenth century BCE, although Ben Tor does say that he cannot say with certainty whether it was Solomon who built the gate at Hazor or not. The evidence of the gates and the pottery therefore appear to support a tenth century BCE date and indicate large fortified cities at Hazor and Gezer in this period.

CHAPTER 10

TENTH CENTURY EVIDENCE AT TEL JEZREEL AND TEL REHOV

10.1 Introduction

Two important tels in the north of the country, both close to Megiddo and Beth Shean provide significant evidence for the tenth century BCE.

10.1.1 Tel Jezreel

Tel Jezreel, is situated in the eastern part of the Jezreel Valley between Megiddo and Beth Shean. David Ussishkin from the Tel Aviv University, and John Woodhead from the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, were co-directors of excavations at the site between 1990 and 1996. They uncovered a fortified enclosure, which they attributed to the ninth century BCE and either Omri or Ahab, and they 'interpreted the site as "the central military base for the royal Israelite army at the time of the Omride kings"' (Na'aman 1997b:122). The destruction of the enclosure was attributed to Jehu's *coup d'état* in 842 BCE.

Ahab was believed to have built a subsidiary capital at Jezreel, overlooking the valley of Jezreel. A huge quarried moat and evidence of large-scale building activities has been uncovered and attributed to the Omride dynasty, but a recently excavated pre-Omride settlement at Jezreel may be Solomonic.

Dag Oredsson from the Department of Theology, Uppsala University in Sweden, who was also an area supervisor on the Jezreel excavations writes: "“Solomonic” burnished pottery and a “Solomonic” six-chambered gate uncovered at Omride Jezreel! Will that undermine the concept of a Solomonic era in Northern Israel?" (Oredsson 1998:86).

Oredsson presents Finkelstein's views of the 'low chronology', with Iron Age II starting around 900 BCE and Iron Age I lowered from 1200-1000 BCE to 1130-900 BCE. As previously stated, this results in Stratum IVB-VA at Megiddo, traditionally acknowledged as Solomonic, being attributed to the Omride dynasty, and the

destruction layer previously associated with Shishak, to King Hazael of Aram in the ninth century.

10.1.2 Tel Rehov

Tel Rehov lies in the Northern Jordan Valley, a few kilometres south of Beth Shean, but although it is one of Israel's largest and most important sites, it is the least excavated (Mazar & Camp 2000). Amihai Mazar believes the reason for this is because the site is not mentioned in the Bible, although it is mentioned in ancient Egyptian sources dating to the New Kingdom between the fifteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. Rehov is mentioned in Pharaoh Shishak's list of conquered cities from his campaign of 925 BCE, in Pharaoh Seti's victory stele left at Beth Shean around 1400 BCE and in Papyrus Anastasi 1, written by an Egyptian scribe in the thirteenth century BCE.

In 1997, after concluding nine seasons of digging at Beth Shean, Mazar began excavations at Tel Rehov. He has been excavating there for the past three years on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and has shown that the site was occupied from the sixteenth century BCE to the twelfth century CE. At its peak, the city covered twenty-five acres, which included an upper and a lower city, and by the tenth century BCE, Rehov was an important Israelite city. Mazar believes his 'excavations have produced rich data relating to this debate' (Mazar & Camp 2000:42). The debate that Mazar refers to is that pertaining to the dating of the archaeological data relating to the tenth and ninth centuries BCE and the United Monarchy.

'Rehov has recently emerged as a focal point for the study of the transition from Canaanite to Israelite rule, and especially the emergence of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon.' (Mazar & Camp 2000:40)

10.2 The Archaeological Evidence

10.2.1 Tel Jezreel

Pottery finds at Jezreel indicate that it was occupied during Iron Age I (1200-1000 BCE) and in the eighth and sixth centuries (Oredsson 1998:90). In a building east of

the six-chambered gate, three strata were distinguished. Although not much pottery was found on the floor, a rich assemblage was found in the fill below the floor in one of the rooms. Oredsson believes that this belongs to a pre-Omrade Jezreel. Restorable pottery was found in another part of the house on a floor above the Omride level, and Oredsson labels this as post-Omrade Jezreel. The pottery from all three strata was similar, showing that the three phases were close together in time.

The late Orna Zimhoni, a pottery expert from the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University, recognised three distinct types of fill at Tel Jezreel (Zimhoni 1997:83). A red brown soil below the walls that were founded on bedrock, a grey-brown soil, associated with the gate-house, and a stony fill which served as a supporting layer below the floors and above the red-brown fill.

10.2.1.1 Omride Jezreel

Omrade Jezreel was a well-fortified city, with a six-chambered gate and surrounded by a casemate wall. Excavations have shown that the previous settlement was cleared away before building the citadel. A glacis was excavated along the outside of the city wall and a revetment wall supported it. Outside this, a huge moat was cut into bedrock. The interior of the city is still largely unknown, but the major fortifications suggest public buildings such as storerooms, military quarters and stables.

Six-chambered gates and casemate walls have been related to the Solomonic strata at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer, but Oredsson points out that ninth century gates of this type have also been found at Lachish, Ashdod, and Tel Batash. Casemate walls have also been found in eleventh to seventh century contexts. (Oredsson 1998:93). The only clue for dating therefore, is the pottery found on the floor of the house discussed above. Not much pottery was found, and this can only be dated between the tenth and ninth centuries BCE. Zimhoni says: 'A clear resemblance is observed between the pottery from Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo and that found on floors of the destroyed enclosure at Jezreel.' (Zimhoni 1997:91) Unfortunately there is not enough evidence to establish the duration of a phase at either Jezreel or Megiddo.

Finkelstein finds support for his theory of a low chronology at Jezreel, in the similarity between the hand-burnished red slipped bowls found at Omride Jezreel and

Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo. He sees this as evidence for lowering the date of Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo to the ninth century BCE. John Woodhead concurs (Ussishkin & Woodhead 1997:70), but Ussishkin believes that Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo could have been founded in the tenth century BCE and continued to exist during the Omride dynasty. Both cities could have been destroyed simultaneously during the revolt of Jehu in 842 BCE.

Hugh Williamson has made a study of the biblical texts relating to Jezreel, and finds the text concerning the overthrow of Ahab's family and the killing of Jezebel by Jehu (2 Kings 9-10) has a firm historical ground, suggesting that the fortifications be associated with the Omride dynasty (Williamson 1991:72-89).

Oredsson agrees that the textual material goes well with the archaeological evidence, but makes the point that *'this identification accepts the Bible as partly based on historical facts*. If not we could just as well relate fortified Jezreel to any other king during the 10th and 9th centuries' (Oredsson 1998:96). If we associate Jezreel with the Omride dynasty, and the destruction with Jehu's revolt or Aramaen campaigns at the end of the ninth century BCE, we have a chronological guide for dating strata at other sites.

Zimhoni believes the similarity of Jezreel's pottery with Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, makes it difficult to attribute the destruction of this stratum to Shishak. She concludes: 'The ceramic finds from Tel Jezreel warrant a re-evaluation of the date of similar pottery assemblages from Megiddo and other sites in northern Israel' (Zimhoni 1997:93).

10.2.1.2 Pre-Omride Jezreel

Zimhoni believes that either natural erosion or the effects of monumental building activity could have destroyed traces of pre-Omride settlements, and the main source of clues to the existence of these settlements is in the constructional fills (Zimhoni 1997:84). There were no pre-enclosure buildings found, and the evidence of an earlier settlement depends mainly on the pottery found in the fills.

Although previous settlements were cleared to bedrock before building the fortified settlement of Omride Jezreel, Oredsson states that there is clear evidence of a previous substantial Iron Age IIAB settlement. The large amount of pottery that was found in the fill below the Omride floor was similar to the pottery found on the floor, and also similar to pottery found at other sites, including Megiddo VA-IVB. There have been major later disturbances, and the stratigraphy is confusing.

Oredsson says that further investigation could clarify the situation, but that we do have 'evidence of a pre-Omride settlement suggesting something more than a village,' (Oredsson 1998:95) confirming Mazar's theory of royal monumental architecture in the tenth century. Ashlar stones typical of the tenth century were found in secondary use in the foundations of the fortified settlement and dated to the same time as the pottery in the fills.

With regards to the biblical references, Williamson also noted the possible existence of settlements at Jezreel, which pre-date the Omride enclosure, basing his analysis on the passage in Joshua (Williamson 1991:76).

The fourth lot came out for Issachar, clan by clan. Their territory included: Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem,

(Joshua 19:17-18, NIV)

Jezreel is also mentioned in the list of Solomon's officers in 1 Kings.

Baana son of Ahilud – in Taanach and Megiddo, and in all Beth Shan next to Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across to Jokmeam.

(1 Kings 4:12, NIV)

These references suggest a settlement during the time of Solomon and even before. Jezreel was therefore not settled for the first time during the Omride dynasty.

10.2.2 Tel Rehov

Mud brick architecture predominates at this site, requiring a very specific method of excavation. Brooms and pointed trowels are used, rather than picks and spades. Another feature that Mazar found was the preservation of stratified materials such as grain and wood which can be subjected to Carbon 14 dating. This is very important for the dating of the tenth century pottery, which is the subject of much debate.

Between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries BCE, Mazar distinguished three Canaanite cities, all apparently unfortified and containing typical Canaanite pottery. This pottery is rough and only occasionally painted and is easily distinguished from the Iron Age II pottery which is hand-burnished and red-slipped. No red-slipped pottery was found in the Canaanite levels.

The strata above these Canaanite cities are dated to Iron Age II, with the first Israelite city in the tenth century. Israelite Rehov consists of an upper and lower city and Mazar found no evidence of a city wall (Mazar & Camp 2000:43). In the lower city parts of a large mud-brick public building with a spacious hall was exposed. This city was destroyed and immediately rebuilt, and Mazar states this could either have been the work of Pharaoh Sheshonq in 925 BCE or else, due to an earthquake.

The pottery here differs from the previous stratum, with the painted decoration and pottery forms of the Canaanite tradition disappearing and new forms that are covered with highly burnished red-slip, being discovered. The level above this city contained much of the same pottery and in this level Mazar also discovered a large quantity of charred wheat, which can be subjected to Carbon 14 dating, as well as carbonised wood, which had been used as a foundation for walls and floors. Heavy fire was responsible for the destruction of this city, as is evidenced in the destruction layer. On the floors of the buildings, broken pottery vessels, seals, clay figurines and metal objects were found.

10.2.2.1 Pottery traditions

Finkelstein has suggested lowering the date of the pottery assemblages traditionally dated to the time of Solomon and the United Monarchy in the mid-tenth century BCE to the time of Ahab in the mid-ninth century BCE. This would also mean that the

pottery traditionally dated to the eleventh century BCE would then be that of the tenth century BCE. If the 'low chronology' of Finkelstein is accepted, a very different view of the United Monarchy will result. Mazar rejects this dating and says Finkelstein's 'argument is unacceptable' (Mazar & Camp 2000), and that an examination of the pottery traditionally dated to these centuries, will help resolve the issue.

Mazar distinguishes two major pottery traditions at Tel Rehov between the thirteenth and eighth centuries BCE. The first group consists of the Canaanite pottery from the thirteenth to the eleventh centuries BCE, and a second group from the tenth to the eighth centuries BCE (Mazar & Camp 2000:48).

Typical Canaanite Pottery

The basic Canaanite pottery traditions, which extend between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries BCE can be sub-divided into three phases. In the thirteenth century the pottery was un-burnished, un-slipped and sometimes painted. These forms continued into the twelfth century together with a few new forms.

Similar forms also appeared at Beth Shean where 'they can be correlated with an unquestioned Egyptian twentieth Dynasty context (12 century BCE). Their date is therefore secure' (Mazar & Camp 2000:48). The same traditions along with a few new forms are evident in the eleventh century, as well as red-painted pottery decorated with horizontal or wavy lines. There is no slip or burnish evident on this pottery.

Israelite Burnished Pottery

In the next phase there was a dramatic change in tradition. Although there was still some of the Canaanite pottery found in this level, most of the pottery was now red-slipped and hand-painted, with decoration limited to geometric designs. This pottery from the tenth century city continues with no change into the ninth century. Similar pottery was found in all other sites in the north that are traditionally dated to the tenth century, such as Megiddo, Hazor and Taanach.

Pottery found in the destruction level at Jezreel, which dates to after the death of Ahab in the mid-ninth century led Finkelstein to suggest that all similar pottery should be

dated to that time. Mazar says that the evidence at Rehov shows that this pottery had a long life and should not only be attributed to the ninth century. In the two strata that Mazar excavated from this era, he found too many sub-phases with successive floor surfaces to 'squeeze the stratigraphic sequence at Rehov into half of the ninth century BCE' (Mazar & Camp 2000:50).

Mazar goes on to say it is almost impossible at this time to distinguish between the pottery of the tenth century and that of the ninth century BCE. A quantitative study in the future is necessary before a distinction can be made between the pottery assemblages of these two centuries.

10.3 Conclusion

With regards to Tel Jezreel, Oredsson writes that although impressed by Finkelstein's proposed low chronology, after examining the evidence of Mazar and Na'aman, 'Tel Jezreel does not support this alternative chronology but neither can it be used as clear evidence of a Solomonic era' (Oredsson 1998:101).

The archaeological evidence however, suggests the existence of a pre-Omrade settlement at Jezreel in the tenth century and Williamson believes that the archaeological data appears to confirm that the biblical lists reflect the tenth century situation.

Previous settlements were cleared to bedrock before the fortified enclosure of the Omride dynasty was erected, so although no monumental architecture has been uncovered in the pre-Omrade settlement, the discovery of ashlar masonry in secondary use in the foundation walls of Omride Jezreel suggests a fairly substantial pre-Omrade settlement there. The evidence of a pre-Omrade Jezreel, together with ashlar stones, typical of those used in the tenth century BCE monumental architecture, as well as the pottery found below the floor of the Omride enclosure, together with the biblical evidence, appears to confirm the existence of a substantial settlement in the tenth century BCE.

The same applies to Tel Rehov, where Mazar concludes from his findings to date that: 'From all the evidence, it seems clear that during the tenth century BCE, the time of the United Monarchy, Rehov was a well-planned, thriving city of about twenty-five acres, with a material culture that resembles other sites throughout the country that are dated to the tenth century BCE according to the traditional chronology' (Mazar & Camp 2000:51). He believes that the long neglected site will play a key role in the understanding of the history of ancient Israel.

These two key sites in the north both appear to confirm the presence of substantial cities with material cultures, which resemble other sites that date to the tenth century BCE. Pre-Omridd Jezreel, has however not produced any monumental architecture, although ashlar masonry has been found in secondary use, suggesting the presence of fortifications or buildings typical of other tenth century sites.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSIONS

Finkelstein's proposed low chronology has become such a hotly debated issue, that for the first time in the paper's history, the worlds' leading financial newspaper, the Wall Street Journal covered sessions of the Biblical Archaeological Society at their Annual Meeting (Shanks 1998a:57). Shanks quotes the article in the Wall Street Journal on December 31, 1997 as saying that the debate about the tenth century 'is becoming the hottest issue since the debate about who wrote various parts of the Bible.'

Finkelstein's views have caused him to become a minor celebrity, but the article goes on to state that: 'Nonetheless, the notion that David and Solomon united the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the tenth century BCE continues to hold sway,' and the extreme Biblical Minimalists who deny any historicity to the kingdoms of David and Solomon have been 'largely dismissed as eccentrics' (Shanks 1998a:57).

Finkelstein sums up his proposal for the Low Chronology by saying that the challenge for future research will be to 'reveal new, undebatable chronological anchors for the tenth-ninth centuries BCE. Until this is achieved, we are left with two alternatives, not being able to give a clear-cut verdict between them. The matter is therefore left to the overall historical and cultural understanding of each scholar' (Finkelstein 1996:185).

The historicity of some accounts depends on the dates attributed to the strata at Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor for the tenth century BCE. New methods in archaeology, advanced technology and more advanced techniques in Carbon-14 dating, may, in the future allow for more accurate dating. This may then give us a very different view to the traditional approach, and the United Monarchy of David and Solomon, but until that time, we have no choice but to adhere to the traditional chronology.

With regards to pottery being used for dating, Mazar says: 'Future research will have to concentrate on....studies based on seriation and quantitative analysis, isolation of homogenous assemblages belonging to a short time span, and the correlation of these

assemblages with current ...C14 dates' Mazar 1997:162). McCarter is adamant that 'This business with tenth or ninth century ceramics will work itself out. It has to be permitted to do that' (Shanks 1997b:36).

Attempts have been made to discredit the Bible as a source for re-constructing a history of ancient Israel, and while the Bible may not reflect history, as it is understood today, it still remains the major, and often the only source for understanding and re-constructing those ancient times. It is necessary to attempt to understand the presuppositions and biases of the biblical writers before an interpretation or conclusion can be reached regarding the biblical texts. Although some scholars believe that history and the past are lost to us forever, and that there is nothing left, we nevertheless need to be positive about the little that is left, and use what we have to attempt to get closer to the 'inside' story.

Na'aman feels that we must 'take into account the gap between modern definitions of states and how the ancient societies understood and defined themselves' (Na'aman 1997:67). Terminology must be understood in context. If we do this, we may be in a better position to evaluate the Biblical texts relating to the United Monarchy. The kingdom of David and Solomon may not have been as vast or as grand as the Bible describes, but the archaeological evidence and texts strongly support the existence of the United Monarchy in the tenth century BCE as a historical fact.

The various traditions and the different sources existed, the writers or redactors existed, why then is it not possible to accept that the United Monarchy of David and Solomon existed? Perhaps the kingdom was not as grand and glorious as the biblical records imply, perhaps Solomon was not as wise or wealthy as the accounts suggest, but the records are there, and have been for over two thousand years. It is only our modern perspectives and worldview that have caused our interpretation or understanding of the evidence to change.

The debate is endless, and the views of the Minimalists need to be considered. They do however base their conclusions on the 'supposed' absence of evidence, but what evidence there is, they disregard. They argue that the archaeological evidence from the tenth century BCE is non-existent and the biblical accounts are unhistorical. They

claim that they are unable to obtain any historical information from the biblical records pertaining to the tenth century BCE, because they believe that the Bible can only tell us about the period in which it was written, which they claim is the third and fourth centuries BCE.

The 'House of David' is mentioned in inscriptions on both the Tel Dan stele and the Mesha stele, witnessing to the fact that Israel's kings traced their descent to David. The Minimalists disregard these as evidence, because they say the stelae were found out of context and they question the authenticity of the Tel Dan stele. They also disregard the evidence of Shishak's stele found at Megiddo, which has been used as evidence of Shishak's destruction of Stratum VA-IVB at Megiddo, as this was found out of context in rubble on the site.

Most scholars agree that the United Monarchy existed. Finkelstein does not deny the historicity of the United Monarchy, only the extent of the empire, which the biblical accounts record. If his proposal for lowering the traditional chronology is accepted, strata that will give us a very different picture of this period will represent the United Monarchy. The strata traditionally associated with Solomon, would then be associated with the Omride dynasty, while the United Monarchy would consist of small unfortified villages. The stratum associated with the Omride dynasty and the ninth century would consist of large well-fortified cities with monumental constructions and an advanced administration and infrastructure. At this point there is not enough conclusive evidence to change the traditional chronology, by lowering it.

The tenth century strata at Megiddo, Gezer, Hazor, Jezreel and Tel Rehov are therefore represented by fairly substantial cities that were not densely populated. They were fortified with casemate walls constructed from ashlar masonry and six-chambered gates. Dever and Ben-Tor both claim the gates at Gezer and Hazor date to the tenth century BCE. Typical tenth century pottery was red-slipped and hand-burnished.

All the available evidence to date, points to the fact that the United Monarchy of David and Solomon did exist in the tenth century, but that it was not quite as powerful as the Bible would have us believe, and this may be the greatest contribution that the

debate has made so far. There are however no fixed or final interpretations in archaeology, and new discoveries, interpretations and ideas should always be investigated.

CHAPTER 12

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